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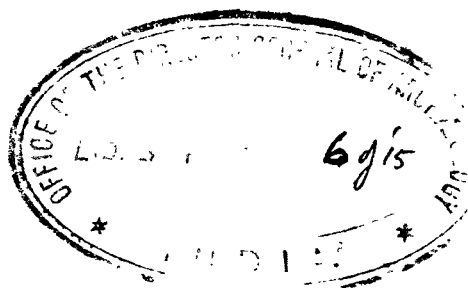


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## **THE SHÁHNÁMA OF FIRDAUSÍ.**

Done into English by

**ARTHUR GEORGE WARNER, M.A.,**

AND

**EDMOND WARNER, B.A.**

The year A.D. 1010 saw the completion of the Sháhnáma, the great Persian epic. Its author, the poet Firdausí, spent over thirty laborious years in its composition, only to experience, when the task had been achieved, a heart-breaking disappointment well worthy of inclusion in any record of the calamities of authors. His work has survived the test of time, and by general consent is accounted to be one of the few great epics of the world. Geographically, and in some other respects, it may be said to stand half-way between the epics of Europe and those of India. In its own land it has no peer, while in construction and subject-matter it is unique. Other epics centre round some heroic character or incident to which all else is subservient. In the Sháhnáma there is no lack either of heroes or of incidents, but its real hero is the ancient Persian people, and its theme their whole surviving legendary history from the days of the First Man to the death of the last Sásanian Sháh in the middle of the seventh century of our era. It is the glory of the Persian race that they alone among all nations possess such a record, based as it is on their own traditions and set forth in the words of their greatest poet. In another sense, too, the Sháhnáma is unique. The authors of the other great epics tell us little or nothing of their own personalities or of their sources of information. Their works are fairy palaces suspended in mid air; we see the result, but know not how it was achieved. The author of the Sháhnáma takes us into his confidence from the first, so that in reading it we are let into the secret of epic-making, and can apply the knowledge thus gained to solve the problem of the construction of its great congeners. To the student of comparative mythology and folk-lore, to the lover of historic romance or romantic history, and to all that are fond of tales of high achievements and the geste of heroes, the Sháhnáma is a storehouse of rich and abundant material. To set forth a complete presentment of it with the needful notes and elucidations is the object of the present translation, made from two of the best printed texts of the original—that of Vullers and Landauer, and that of Turner Macan.

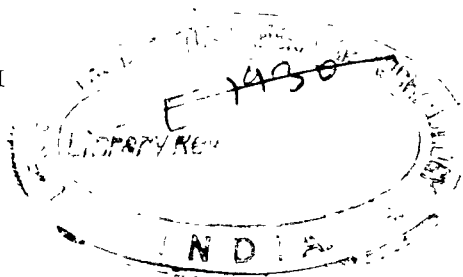
THE  
SHÁHNÁMA OF FIRDAUSÍ

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY  
ARTHUR GEORGE WARNER, M.A.  
AND  
EDMOND WARNER, B.A.

*"The homes that are the dwellings of to-day  
Will sink 'neath shower and sunshine to decay,  
But storm and rain shall never mar what I  
Have built—the palace of my poetry."*

FIRDAUSÍ

VOL. VI



LONDON  
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# THE SHÁHNÁMA

VOL. VI.

A



# GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE SÁSÁNIANS

(According to the *Shāhnāma* <sup>1</sup>)

Sásān = *d.* of Pāpak

Ardshir Pāpakān (22) = *d.* of Ardawān

Shāpūr (23) = *d.* of Mihrak

Urmuzd (24)

Bahrām (25)

Bahrām (26)

Bahrām (27)

Narsi (28)

Urmuzd (29)

Ardshir (31)

Núsha = Táir

Málíka = Shāpūr (30) = Diláfrúz-i-Farrukhpái

Shāpūr (32)

Bahrām (33)

a daughter

Sapínúđ *d.* of Shangul = Bahrām Gúr (35)  
and many other  
wives

Yazdagird (34)

Yazdagird (36)

Pirúz (38)

Hurmuz (37)

Persian lady = Kubád (40)

Balāsh (39)

Jámásp

*d.* of the Khān = Núshírwān (41) = a Christian lady

Hurmuzd (42) five  
other  
sons

Rustam Maryam = Khusrau (43) = Shirín and Gurdya s. of Bahrām  
*d.* of Parwiz Chulana  
cesar

Kubád (44)  
(Shirwí)

Ardshir (45)

Nastúr

Shahryar

Farúd

Mardānsháh

Yazdagird (50)

Guráz (46)  
(usurper)

Farrukhzíd (49)

many  
other sons

Púrāndukht (47)

Azarmdukht (48)

<sup>1</sup> From Khusrau Parwiz onward some of the relationships, left vague in the poem, are given from other sources.





## ABBREVIATIONS

C.—Macan's edition of the *Shāhnāma*.

L.—Lumsden's                   do.

P.—Mohl's                   do.

T.—Tihirān               do.

V.—Vullers'               do.

- AM.    The *Voiage and Travayle* of Sir John Maundeville,  
          Knight. . . . Edited . . . by John Ashton.
- AS.    The *Shāh Nāméh* of . . . Firdausi. Translated and  
          abridged . . . By James Atkinson, Esq.
- BAG.   A History of Ancient Geography. By E. H. Bunbury,  
          F.R.G.S.
- BAN.   A Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights'  
          Entertainments . . . By Richard F. Burton.
- BBR.   Buddhist Records of the Western World. Translated from  
          the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (A.D. 629). By Samuel  
          Beal.
- BHA.   The History of Alexander the Great, being the Syriac  
          Version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes. Edited . . . with  
          an English Translation and Notes, by Ernest A. Wallis  
          Budge, M.A.
- BLEA.  The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great, being a  
          Series of Translations of the Ethiopic Histories of  
          Alexander. . . . By E. A. Wallis Budge, Litt.D., F.S.A.
- DAA.   Arriani *Anabasis*. . . . F. Dubner.
- DAI.   Arriani *Indica*. . . . F. Dubner.
- DEI.   J. Darmesteter, *Études Iraniennes*.
- DHA.   The History of Antiquity. From the German of Professor  
          Max Duncker. By the late Evelyn Abbott, M.A.

- EHI. The History of India as told by its own Historians. By Sir H. M. Elliot, K.C.B.
- GDF. The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. By Edward Gibbon, Esq. With Notes by Dean Milman and M. Guizot. Edited, with additional Notes, by William Smith, LL.D.
- GH. The Land of the Hittites. . . . By John Garstang, D.Sc.
- GKS. Kleine Schriften von Alfred von Gutschmid.
- HB. The Country of Balochistan. . . . By A. W. Hughes, F.R.G.S.
- HQC. Q. Curtius Rufus. . . . ed. Edmundus Hedicke.
- JRGS. The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society.
- LAN. The Arabian Nights' Entertainments. A New Translation from the Arabic. . . . By Edward William Lane.
- MA. Alexandre le Grand. . . . Par Paul Meyer.
- MCAI. Ancient India as described by Megasthenés and Arrian. . . . By J. W. M'Crindle, M.A.
- MCI. The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great. . . . By J. W. M'Crindle, M.A. . . . New Edition.
- MF. Reliqua Arriani et Scriptorum de rebus Alexandri M. Fragmenta collegit. . . . Carolus Muller.
- MM. Maçoudi: Les Prairies d'Or. Texte et Traduction, par C. Barbier de Meynard et Pavet de Courteille.
- MPC. Pseudo-Callisthenes, primum edidit Carolus Mullerus.
- NAR. Beitrage zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans, von Prof. Dr. Th. Noldeke in Denkschriften der . . . Akademie der Wissenschaften. . . . Wien, 1890.
- NIN. Das Iranische Nationalepos von Theodor Noldeke.
- NK. Geschichte des Artachšir i Pápakán aus dem Pehlewi übersetzt . . . von Th. Noldeke.
- NT. Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden . . . von Th. Noldeke.
- RK. The Koran: Translated . . . by the Rev. J. M. Rodwell, M.A.

- RM. The Rauzat-us-safa ; or, Garden of Purity. . . By . . .  
Mirkhond. . . . Translated . . . by E. Rehatsek.
- RSM. The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy. By George  
Rawlinson, M.A.
- SK. The Koran. . . . Translated . . . . by George Sale, Gent.
- SM. History of the Early Kings of Persia. . . . Translated  
from the original . . . Persian of Mirkhond . . . by  
David Shea.
- SP. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea. . . . Translated  
from the Greek and annotated by Wilfred H. Schoff,  
A.M.
- WPT. Dr. E. W. West's Translation of the Pahlavi Texts in the  
Sacred Books of the East. Reference to Parts and  
pages.
- YMP. The Book of Ser Marco Polo . . . newly translated. . . .  
By Colonel Henry Yule, C.B.
- ZT. Chronique de Abou-Djafar-Mo'hammed-Ben-Djarir-Ben-  
Yezid Tabari, traduite. . . . Par M. Hermann Zotenburg.

## NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

*ā* as in "water."

*í* as in "pique."

*û* as in "rude."

*a* as in "servant."

*i* as in "sin."

*u* as in "foot."

*ai* as in "time."

*au* as *ou* in "cloud."

*g* is always hard as in "give."

*kh* as *ch* in the German "buch."

*zh* as *z* in "azure."

## II

# THE KAIÁNIAN DYNASTY

*(Concluded)*



## XVIII

### D Á R Á B

#### HE REIGNED TWELVE YEARS

#### ARGUMENT

Dáráb establishes himself upon the throne, defeats the Arabs and the Rúmans, and marries the daughter of Failakús, the Cæsar. Conceiving, however, a dislike for his spouse, he sends her back to her father, at whose court her child is born, named Sikandar, for the reason given in the story, and brought up by Failakús as his own son and heir. Dáráb meanwhile marries again, has another son—Dárá—falls into ill-health, appoints Dárá his successor, and dies.

#### NOTE

At this point in the *Sháhnáma*, in as much as this and the two following reigns deal almost entirely with the subject of Alexander the Great, who is known to Orientals under the name of Iskandar or Sikandar, there is an important change in the provenance and character of the subject-matter. We have had an instance already in which it seemed probable that recourse was being had indirectly to Greek writers,<sup>1</sup> but in the present case the debt to them is indisputable. The basis of the whole account is Greek, and so in a great measure is the superstructure, but the latter to some extent has been pulled down and rebuilt, modified in detail, and added to, by Egyptian, Arabic, and Persian hands. As a general introduction to the three following reigns, therefore, it will be well to set before the reader in outline such facts as are necessary for the proper understanding of the accounts given in the reigns in question.

Alexander the Great, in his expedition to the East, was accompanied by a literary and scientific staff, in order that the results

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. v. p. 281.

achieved might be handed down to posterity in a way worthy of so great an occasion. Thus Eumenes kept the royal diary,<sup>1</sup> Bæton and Diognetus recorded the distances traversed,<sup>2</sup> Aristobulus was interested in matters geographical, ethnological, and botanical,<sup>3</sup> while Callisthenes and others drew up general histories. Some of Alexander's commanders too, such as Ptolemy, son of Lagus, who became King of Egypt, Nearchus, the admiral, and Onesicritus, the pilot, of Alexander's fleet, also left accounts, as did others who were contemporaries but took no part in the expedition. The result was a large assortment of kindred works, not one of which is extant in its original form, though later writers have preserved a good deal of the substance, and in some cases fragments, of the originals. Thus Arrian, our best authority on the whole subject, based his *Anabasis* on Ptolemy and Aristobulus,<sup>4</sup> and in his *Indica* made much use of Nearchus.<sup>5</sup> Arrian, however, tells us that even Ptolemy and Aristobulus were not always in agreement,<sup>6</sup> and further, that though Alexander's expedition served to explode many fables, it at the same time led to the fabrication of fresh ones.<sup>7</sup> Onesicritus, for instance, who, though only the pilot, claimed in his account to have been the admiral,<sup>8</sup> of Alexander's fleet, heard tell of two dragons, or serpents, measuring 80 and 140 cubits in length respectively,<sup>9</sup> and speaks of whales off the coast of Balúchistán as being half a stade, *i.e.* over 100 yards, long, and broad in proportion.<sup>10</sup> Bæton relieved the prosaic details of mensuration with the account of a sylvan folk—natives of Mount Imaus—who had backward-pointing feet.<sup>11</sup> Again, the question as to whether or no the Amazons visited Alexander split the early authorities into two separate camps.<sup>12</sup> We may conclude, therefore, that the seeds of the Romance that grew up in later times round the personality of Alexander the Great were sown in his lifetime. The growth thus started not merely increased in bulk by a natural process of evolution in succeeding centuries, but also absorbed materials that originally had no connexion at all with him and his undertakings. Thus, for example, when the historic facts of his career had grown somewhat dim in the popular mind, the expedition in B.C. 332 of his uncle Alexander I. of Epirus to

<sup>1</sup> MF, p. 121.<sup>2</sup> *Id.* 134.<sup>3</sup> *Id.* 94.<sup>4</sup> DAA, Pref., Bk. v. c. 7.<sup>5</sup> DAI, c. 18 *seq.*<sup>6</sup> DAA, iii. 4; iv. 14.<sup>7</sup> *Id.* v. 4.<sup>8</sup> *Id.* vi. 2.<sup>9</sup> MF, p. 50, fr. 7.<sup>10</sup> *Id.* p. 57, fr. 30. This, however, was quite a moderate estimate. Pliny, in his *Nat. Hist.*, lib. ix. sect. 2, ed. Ludovicus Janus, speaks of "Balænae quaternum jugerum."<sup>11</sup> *Id.* 135, fr. 3.<sup>12</sup> Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, c. 46.



Italy became part of his legend,<sup>1</sup> and he was credited later on with having visited Candace, the Ethiopian queen, at Meroe. We may assume, too, that the experiences of the rank and file of his time-expired veterans, military and naval, lost nothing in the telling. Speaking generally too, the travellers' tales, often based on misunderstood metaphor or misinterpreted natural phenomena—tales such as in after-times were told by the friar Odorico and Sir John Maundeville—would add their quota to the romance of the subject. The reader will find examples of such fables in the reign of Sikandar. Long before his time, however, they had made their way from India to Greece. Homer knew something of them, so did Herodotus, so did Hecataeus probably, and so beyond doubt did Ctesias. Moreover, no form was too monstrous or abnormal for the Indian imagination to conceive with respect to god or demon or beings, like the Rākshasas, who were a blend of demon and of man. The companions of Alexander merely heard over again what earlier adventurers had heard, but their association with Alexander brought about a special association of such tales with him.

It should be noted further that the Greeks, like ourselves, had two Indies—an Eastern and a Western—and consequently the fables derived from and respecting the Indians or, as they were called, Ethiopians, were held to apply to the West as well as to the East.<sup>2</sup>

It was in Egypt—the land which he had delivered from the hated Persians and where Ptolemy and his successors had maintained the Alexandrian tradition and had ruled with so much glory—and it was at Alexandria, which the great conqueror had founded and where he was buried, that the Greek Romance of Alexander, so far as we are aware, first received literary form and expression. The author is unknown, but appears to have written about the third century of the Christian era. The authorship is attributed in one of the extant MSS. of the work to the historian Callisthenes, the relative of Aristotle through whose influence it came about that he accompanied Alexander to the East. His rough comments, however, on Alexander's adoption of Persian customs were not well received by the conqueror; he was imprisoned and died in captivity. The title of "The Pseudo-Callisthenes," by which the Romance now is known, is said to have been bestowed upon it in the first instance by Isaac Casaubon.<sup>3</sup>

The work no longer is extant in what we may call its primitive form, but this, branching in three directions, gave rise to a numerous progeny of MSS., of which some twenty still survive.

<sup>1</sup> NAR. p. 4; MPC. Bk. i. c. 29.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> MA, ii. 4.

Three of them, known as A, B, and C respectively, are preserved in the National Library in Paris, and to one or other of these three the rest of the MSS. are said to conform in character.<sup>1</sup> The MS. known as A, a very early Latin version of the Romance supposed to have been made by one Julius Valerius early in the fifth century A.D., and an Armenian version of about the same date,<sup>2</sup> are looked upon as representing collectively the nearest approximation that we possess to the original work. The MS. known as B is the only one of the three that attributes the authorship to Callisthenes.<sup>3</sup>

During the seventh century A.D. some Greek text of the Romance, conforming generally to the A type, was translated into middle Persian, or Pahlaví, as it is called, and this Pahlaví version was retranslated shortly afterwards into Syriac. No trace of the Pahlaví version remains, and there is no scrap of historical evidence to indicate that such a work ever existed, but the Syriac version is still extant, and has been edited with an English translation by Budge. We call it BHA, and shall have occasion frequently to refer to it in the ensuing pages.

It was the publication of this Syriac version that led Professor Noldeke to infer, and satisfactorily to prove, that a Pahlaví version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes once must have existed. Such proofs naturally are very technical, but one example may be given by way of illustration. It concerns the transliteration of proper names unknown to the Syriac translator. Noldeke found that in the Syriac version the letter *l* was substituted for the letter *r* in such words as Osiris, Abdera, Kraterus, Parmenion, and others, while, on the other hand, *r* was substituted for *l* in Plateæa, Eumelus, Candaules, &c. Now, there is nothing in the form of these two letters, as they are written in Greek, Arabic, or in Syriac itself to account for such substitutions and interchanges, but it so happens that in Pahlaví the same sign stands for both *l* and *r*, and the conclusion follows that the Syriac version was made not from the Greek or Arabic, but from the Pahlaví.<sup>4</sup>

Appended to all the MSS. of the Syriac version, distinct from it, but, like it, based upon the Pseudo-Callisthenes, there is

<sup>1</sup> *Id.*

<sup>2</sup> MPC, p. xxvi.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* viii. and i.

<sup>4</sup> The proofs referred to above will be found set out at large in NAR. p. 11 *seq.* The present writer desires to take this opportunity to acknowledge generally and once for all his indebtedness not only to this work, but also to Professor Noldeke's edition of the *Kárnámak-i-Ardshir-i-Pápakán* (NK) and of Tabarí's *History of the Sásánians* (NT). The first two concern the present volume of this translation only, but the last will be in constant requisition till the end. All three, and to them we must add the *Íránian National Epos* (NIN), are invaluable.

extant a Syriac Christian Legend of Alexander which claims to be taken from the manuscripts in the house of the archives of the kings of Alexandria.<sup>1</sup> This Legend was composed about the years A.D. 514 or 515, and seems to have been suggested by an incursion of the Huns through the Caucasus, which took place at that time. The author writes as one horror-stricken at the uncouth aspect and savagery of the invaders, and at the ruin caused by them. Shortly after its composition, it was turned into verse, with some additions by the Syriac poet, Jacob of Sarūg, who died in A.D. 521. The legend, and the additions thus made to it, derive respectively from branches B and C of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, and their subject-matter became known to Muhammad, who made use of it in the Kurān, where Alexander is referred to under the title of "Zū'l-karnain," or "The Two-horned," that name having been suggested by the Legend, where we read: "The Lord said to him (Alexander), 'Behold I have magnified thee above all kingdoms, and I have made horns of iron to grow on thy head, that thou mayest thrust down the kingdoms of the earth with them.'"<sup>2</sup> Naturally, Zū'l-karnain became an interesting personality to the followers of Muhammad. The passage in the Kurān referring to him was much commented on, and the Syriac accounts of him were translated into Arabic. Now it was to the interest of learned Persians, living under Arab rule in the centuries succeeding the Muhammadan conquest of Irān, to impress their masters with the sense of the past greatness of the empire that they had subdued, and for this purpose the legends of the vanquished race were translated into Arabic. It obviously was desirable that so great a hero as Alexander, and one so interesting to the followers of the Prophet, should be utilised, and in order to effect this the whole Persian traditional view of Alexander was altered. As we have seen already,<sup>3</sup> he was held in hate and horror in Sāsānian times as the arch-persecutor and would-be exterminator of Zoroastrianism; he was one of a trinity of ill, of which the other two were Zahhāk and Afrāsiyāb. Persians, however, that had been converted to, or had been brought up in, the Muhammadan Faith soon came to regard Alexander from another standpoint. To them he was no longer an evil being who had striven to uproot the true religion, but the hero commissioned by God to overthrow a false one, in fact another Asfandiyār with other and better aims, for had not his credentials been countersigned by the

<sup>1</sup> BHA. p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* 156. There is a similar passage, p. 146. For the Syriac Legend generally see NAR. 27 *seq.* For the passage in the Kurān see pp. 77-78.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. i. pp. 59, 61, 63, and *cf.* pp. 224, 240.

Prophet himself? This change of view robbed such memories as still survived of Alexander's triumph over Darius Codomanus of much of their bitterness, and it only remained to abate it altogether by legitimating the conqueror's position. This was easily managed, for the author of the Pseudo-Callisthenes had suggested a way. Concerned for the honour of his country by birth or adoption, he had made Alexander out to be the son of the last native king of Egypt—Nectanebus II.—who had succeeded, it was said, in passing himself off to Olympias, the wife of Philip II. of Macedon, during the latter's absence at the wars, as no less a person than Amen-Ra, the two-horned god of Egypt. The Egyptians were old hands at this sort of falsification. Herodotus tells us<sup>1</sup> that Cambyses, after his conquest of Egypt, was made out by the Egyptians to be the son of Nitetis, a daughter of Apries. What Egyptians had done the Persians could do, the necessary story was substituted for that of Nectanebus, as we shall read in this reign, Sikandar became the eldest son of Sháh Dáráb, and the oppressor of Írán one of its national heroes.

At what precise period Alexander assumed his station in the long line of the Sháhs is not known, and probably never will be. In the Pahlavi version, made, it would seem, by some one who was neither an orthodox Zoroastrian nor an orthodox Muhammadan, he was still, as we see from its Syriac representative, the son of Nectanebus; in Firdausí he is the son of Dáráb. Between the two accounts there is a space of some three centuries or more. We may reduce the interval somewhat by assuming, as we may, that the metamorphosis had been completed in the days when Firdausí was growing up, and a new edition of the *Bástán-náma* in modern Persian was being compiled in the middle of the tenth century by order of Abú Mansúr.<sup>2</sup> This, we may assume, contained a version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes as it existed after centuries of adaptation by Persian and Arabic hands. The ascription of a Persian paternity to Alexander can be traced further back. It was known to Tabarí who died in A.D. 922, and to Dínawarí who died in A.D. 896.<sup>3</sup> Neither of them endorses the story, but merely gives it a place among the other accounts that, in accord to the method of Arabic historians, they give of the same event. As these accounts consist of the statements of older authorities, we may consider that the story was current early in the ninth century A.D. Most unfortunately the work that, more than all others, would have thrown light upon that and many another point, and taken us back to the middle of the eighth century, is no longer extant. This was the Arabic translation of the

<sup>1</sup> Bk. iii. c. 2.<sup>2</sup> See Vol. i. p. 67 *seq.*<sup>3</sup> See NAR, pp. 35, 44.

Bástán-náma made by Ibn Mukaffa. He was a Zoroastrian who became a Muhammadan late in life, thereby, as was said of him, merely exchanging one corner of hell for another, as his orthodoxy was more than suspect. He was learned both in the Pahlaví and in the Arabic, and was put to death about A.D. 760. It is not unlikely that he was responsible for the inclusion of Alexander among the legitimate Shāhs. By all accounts he was just the right man in the right place for such an undertaking.

It is hoped that the above sketch may be sufficient to indicate the provenance of the Romance of Alexander the Great and how it came about that it was incorporated into Iránian national legend. It will be seen that it reached Firdausí in a mingled stream. The basis is Greek, and the Pseudo-Callisthenes itself is based on history. The broad facts are there. It tells us that Alexander was a Grecian king, that he conquered Egypt, invaded and subdued Írán, penetrated into India, defeated Porus, returned, died at Babylon, and was buried at Alexandria. Its author introduced Egyptian elements and additions, and it underwent further adaptations at Persian and Arab hands. These will be noted and dealt with as they occur in this and the two following reigns. The vogue of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, however, is not to be circumscribed within such limits as these. For many centuries it superseded the more historic accounts of Alexander that still are extant; and versions, in addition to those already mentioned, have appeared in Latin, Hebrew, Turkish, Ethiopic,<sup>1</sup> Coptic, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch, Slavonic, Malay, and Siamese.<sup>2</sup>

Dárab, the last of the mythical Shāhs, does not appear in the Zandavasta, with which at this point we part company. In order to connect him with the Káinian dynasty he was made the hero of a foundling legend, as we saw in the previous volume.<sup>3</sup> His name was suggested by that of his successor Dára—the historical Darius Codomanus—who was remembered in connexion with the invasion of Persia by Alexander the Great, and his inclusion among the Shāhs was due to the necessity of providing his successor with a father. Later on he was called upon again to act in that capacity to his successor's conqueror.

§ 1. Dárabgird, now Dáráb, is in Párs, some fifty miles south of the salt lake Níris, which also is referred to.

§ 2. Border wars between the Iránians and the northern Arabs were of frequent occurrence.<sup>4</sup> For Shu'ib *cf.* NT, p. 57, *note*.

<sup>1</sup> Also edited and translated by Budge, and referred to in this work as BLEA.

<sup>2</sup> See BHA, p. lxxxviii. *seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Vol. v. p. 294 *seq.*

<sup>4</sup> *Cf.* pp. 322, 330, Vol. i. p. 11, ii. p. 81.

§§ 3-4. The account here given of the incidents that led up to the birth of Sikandar is a Persian substitution for the Egyptian story told in the Pseudo-Callisthenes,<sup>1</sup> and in the Syriac version.<sup>2</sup> The oft-told tale is briefly as follows. Nectanebus<sup>3</sup> was king of Egypt and a great magician. By his magic arts he had triumphed on all occasions over his enemies. At length the time came when he perceived that his spells no longer would avail to protect his country from invader, so, disguising himself, he fled to Macedonia, where he set up as a soothsayer. His fame soon reached the ears of Olympias, the wife of Philip of Macedon, who then was absent on a campaign. She had heard a rumour that he intended to divorce her and take another spouse. Accordingly she made up her mind to consult Nectanebus, and summoned him. He came, and at once was smitten with her beauty. She sought his advice on the matter of the divorce, and he told her that the rumour was not false, but that he could help her. He then went on to inform her that she would have a son by the two-horned god of Egypt—Amen. With the aid of dreams sent by his magic arts he reconciled first her and then Philip to the situation, personated the god himself, and thus became the father of Alexander the Great, taking good care that the birth of the child should occur at the most auspicious astrological moment.

The foal, stated in the text to have been born at the same time as Alexander, is of course the famous steed Bucephalus, which accompanied him in his campaigns as far as the river Hydaspes, the modern Jhilam, and either was killed by the son of Porus when Alexander was forcing the passage of that river or died shortly afterwards of toil and decrepitude at the age of thirty years. Alexander founded two cities by the river in memory of his charger and of his victory over Porus, and named them respectively Bucephala (Jalalpúr?) and Nicæa (Mong?).<sup>4</sup> It is only in the Persian and Ethiopic versions of the Pseudo-Callisthenes that the births of Alexander and Bucephalus are made to synchronise, which shows that both accounts come from an Arabic source, for as the Syriac version represents a no longer extant Pahlavi version, so the Ethiopic derives from a lost Arabic one. In the Ethiopic version Bucephalus is a mare.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MPC, Bk. i. c. 1-12.

<sup>2</sup> BHA, Bk. i. c. 1-12.

<sup>3</sup> Historically, Nectanebus II., or more properly Nekht-neb-f, of the thirtieth dynasty, was the last native king to rule in Egypt. The Persian Sháh, Artaxerxes Ochus, after having been repulsed by him in several campaigns, succeeded in conquering the country in B.C. 343. Nectanebus escaped to Ethiopia.

<sup>4</sup> DAA, Bk. v. c. 14, 19; MCI, p. 110, note.

<sup>5</sup> BLEA, pp. 19, 37.

§ 3. We have here a reference to Russia if the reading is correct. P reads "Sús." The word "Rús" (Byzantine 'Ρῶς) dates from the ninth century A.D., when Northmen (Scandinavians) founded the Russian Empire. It may be a corruption of *roth-men*, "rowers."<sup>1</sup> The Russians were in evidence in Firdausi's days.<sup>2</sup>

§ 4. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. i. c. 13, and in the Syriac version *loc. cit.*, Philip is said to have chosen the name Alexander in memory of a dead son, so called, whom he had had by a former wife. According to one of the accounts in Tabarī, the mother of Alexander was the daughter of the king of the Rūmans and named Halī (Olympias?). The Shāh, her husband, finding that she was troubled by an unpleasant odour, gave orders that means should be found to remedy this. The doctors agreed to exhibit the wood of a tree called in Persian *sandar*. They boiled it and washed her with the extract. Thus, to a great extent, did away with the smell, but not entirely, and, as the cure was not complete, the Shāh sent her back to her father. She was already with child, however, and when her son was born she composed his name by putting her own and that of the tree together, and called him Halī-Sandarūs, that is the primitive form of Al Iskandarūs.<sup>3</sup> Sandar appears to be a shortened form of *sandarū*, the Arar tree, *Callitris quadrivalvis*, a native of north-west Africa, which produces the resin known as "gum juniper" or "sandarach," the latter a word often used in the Shāhnāma.<sup>4</sup> Firdausi takes a different view of the meaning of Iskandar. He makes that word equivalent to Iskandarūs, but he attributes to it apparently its proper meaning. It is derived either from the Greek *σκόροδον*, garlic; or the Latin *asculonium*, shallot. In any case the treatment that the lady underwent appears to have been more or less homeopathic in character.

<sup>1</sup> See GDF, vii. 80, and *note*. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed., s.v. Russia.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. iv. p. 316.

<sup>3</sup> NAR, p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vol. i. p. 74.

## § 1

*How Dáráb built the City of Dárábgírd*

V. 1775 Now from the Maker on earth's king call we  
 A benediction down. That Sháh sun-faced,  
 Who, O Abú'l Kásim! the world hath graced  
 With lovingkindness and with equity,  
 Doth make of right and justice all his quest,  
 And in his justice suffereth naught amiss.  
 Oh! be the world bright with that crown of his—  
 Mahmúd's—and may his whole career be blest.  
 May he be young till youth itself be o'er,  
 And live till life itself shall be no more!

What said the ancient, rustic bard who told  
 About Gushtásp, renowned Bahman,<sup>1</sup> and chiefs  
 Whose counsels prospered, told about Dáráb,  
 And of the rede and usance of Humái?

Now when Dáráb<sup>2</sup> sat on the Kaian throne  
 He girded up his loins, oped wide his hand,  
 And thus harangued the archmages and the chiefs,  
 The magnates and the prudent-hearted sages:—  
 "I did not woo the world by toil and justice;  
 God set the crown upon my head, and none  
 V. 1776 Will see a case in public or in private  
 More wonderful than mine; while as for me  
 I can but make return by doing right  
 That men may bless me after I am gone.  
 None must be irked by travail for my sake  
 In this my season for amassing treasure.  
 May this age prosper under my just rule,  
 And may my subjects' hearts be jubilant."

<sup>1</sup> Ardshír in the original, but *cf.* Vol. v. p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> Dárá in the original, but *cf. id.* p. 297 and *note*.



Then out of Hindústán and out of Rúm,  
 From every wealthy march and peopled land,  
 Ambassadors with gifts and offerings  
 Came to secure the favour of the Sháh.

It happened that one day he went to view  
 The herds of horses that were running wild,  
 And, coming from the lowlands to the mountains,  
 Observed a deep and boundless lake. He gave  
 Commandment that from Hind and from the Rúmans  
 Experienced master-workmen should be brought  
 To open out a channel from the lake.  
 And send a river into all the land.  
 When these skilled men had set the water free  
 He bade them to erect a splendid city,  
 And, when the wall around it was complete,  
 They gave thereto the name of Dárábgird.  
 He lit the Fire upon the mountain-top,  
 Whereto the worshippers of Fire resorted,  
 And then artificers of every craft  
 Were summoned, and the city was adorned.

The Sháh sent countless hosts to every quarter,  
 Safeguarded all the world from enemies,  
 Released it from the fear of any foe,  
 And rent in twain their hearts that wished him woe.

## § 2

### *How Dáráb defeated the Host of Shu'ib*

It came to pass that five score thousand Arabs,  
 Brave, spear-armed cavaliers, marched forth. Shu'ib—  
 A chief sprung from Katíb—commanded them.  
 The monarch of Írán led forth a host,  
 'Tis said, beyond compute. The armies met;  
 The world was all in dudgeon at the troops;

The earth could not support them ; none had room  
 To stir within that land. The rain of arrows,  
 And double-headed javelins, made the soil  
 A cistern seem of blood. On every side  
 The war-cry rose, and corpses showed in piles.  
 Thus for three days and nights the battle waged,  
 The age was straitened to the combatants.  
 The Arabs on the fourth day turned away,  
 And in the night fled from the scene of strife,  
 Shu'ib himself was slain upon the field  
 Of battle, and the Arabs' day was done.  
 A host of Arab steeds with poplar saddles,  
 A mass of helmets, spears, and coats of mail—  
 The havings of the fugitives—remained  
 With that world's lord, the offspring of Humái,  
 Who gave the whole thereof—the steeds and spears,  
 The helms and swords—in largess to the troops.  
 He chose a marchlord, one among the host,  
 Who understood the language of the folk,  
 And sent him to demand the tribute due  
 From those waste parts, that year's and last year's  
 too.

## § 3

*How Dáráb fought with Failakús and took to Wife his  
 Daughter*

Dáráb marched from the desert of the spearmen  
 Rúm-ward to war against that prosperous land.  
 Now Failakús was monarch of the realm ;  
 He and the king of Rúš were close allies.  
 They wrote to say : “ The offspring of Humái  
 Hath led forth countless troops.”

On hearing this  
 The prince of Rúm bethought him of old feuds,

And levied soldiers in 'Ammúriya,<sup>1</sup>  
 All men renowned upon the day of battle.  
 The chiefs of Rúm, what time Dáráb drew nigh,      V. 1778  
 Abandoned all the coast and borderland,  
 While from 'Ammúriya marched Failakús,  
 He and his captains, warriors, and troops.  
 They fought two mighty battles in three days,  
 And on the fourth day when the sun arose  
 Both Failakús and all his army fled;  
 Not one retained his helm or Rúman casque.  
 The Íránians took the wives and children captive,  
 And slaughtered many with their showers of arrows.  
 When fleeing from Dáráb the Rúmans reached  
 The city but two thirds of them arrived,  
 The other had been slain erewhile or wounded;  
 The spear had been insistent at their backs.  
 They sheltered there within that stronghold. Many  
 Sought peace. An envoy came from Failakús,  
 Wise, shrewd, a bearer both of weal and woe,  
 With purses, slaves, and, as an offering,  
 Two caskets filled with royal jewelry.  
 This was the message: "Of the only God  
 I ask for guidance that we may conclude  
 This fight in feast. Ne'er may we strive again,  
 But all be honesty and uprightness:  
 Dark ways and crookèd only end in loss.  
 If to 'Ammúriya, which is my seat,  
 Thou comest and art fain to capture it,  
 My heart will throb for honour and for fame.  
 And I will leave the feasting for the fighting.  
 Act in the manner that becometh kings:  
 Thy father was, and now his son is. Sháh."

Dáráb, on hearing this, convoked his lords,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ancyra probably, the modern Angora, an important place on the route from Byzantium to Armenia and Syria. There was also an ancient Amorium in Phrygia, not far from the borders of Galatia.

<sup>2</sup> Reading with P.

And told before them every circumstance.

"What say ye," said he, "touching this appeal,  
Since Failakús is fain to save his face?"

The chiefs all called down blessings on the Sháh,  
And said: "O Sháh, shrewd-hearted, pure of Faith!  
The king of kings is greatest of the great,  
Let him determine what is best to do.

That famous monarch hath an only daughter  
Of cypress-height and spring-like cheek. In Chín  
One will not look upon so fair an Idol;  
She shineth mid the others like a signet.  
The king of kings on seeing will approve her,  
And that tall Cypress come within his Garden."

V. 1779

The Sháh called in the ambassador from Rúm,  
Told him the counsel of those loyal lieges,  
And said: "Go say to Cæsar: 'If thou art  
So fain to save thine honour thou possessest  
Within thy bower a daughter, one who is  
The crown upon the head of womanhood,  
A perfect picture whom thou call'st Náhíd,<sup>1</sup>  
And settest on a golden throne. Send her,  
Together with the tribute due from Rúm,  
If thou wouldst dwell untroubled in that land."

The envoy heard and, coming like the wind,  
Reported this to Cæsar. Failakús,  
And all the army, were rejoiced thereat,  
Because the Sháh would be his son-in-law.  
The question of the tribute was discussed,  
As to how much the king of Rúm could pay,  
And they agreed that in the month of Mihr  
In every year the Sháh should take from Cæsar  
A hundred thousand eggs of solid gold,  
And with each egg a royal gem, each egg  
To be two score miskáls<sup>2</sup> in weight, each gem

<sup>1</sup> The planet Venus.

<sup>2</sup> A miskál=a dram and three sevenths.

Of highest excellence. First, Failakús  
 Rewarded all his frontier-chiefs that dwelt  
 Within the peopled parts of Rúm. and then  
 Commanded the philosophers, and all  
 That had an interest in those parts, to give  
 Their whole attention to prepare a road.  
 The nobles that escorted the princess  
 Brought every one his present. They made ready  
 A golden litter, slaves, and crown of gold,  
 Ten camels laden with brocade of Rúm  
 With jewelled patterns on a golden ground,  
 Three hundred camel-loads of carpetings,  
 With other presents for the Sháh. Within  
 The litter sat the entrancing Rúman maid V. 1780  
 With prelate and with priest conducting her.  
 Náhíd had sixty damsels in her train.  
 Each with a golden goblet in her hand.  
 Within the goblet there were royal gems,  
 And every Idol wore her crown and earrings.  
 The bishop gave the fair one to Dáráb,  
 And paid the jewels to his treasurer.  
 The Sháh remained no longer on the field,  
 But marched back to Írán. He came to Párs,  
 Rejoicing, with his charming spouse, and set  
 Upon her head the royal coronet.

## § 4

*How Dáráb sent back the Daughter of Failakús to Rúm, and  
 how Sikandar was born*

One night that Moon was sleeping with the Sháh,  
 All gems and colour, scent and loveliness,  
 But verily her breathing was not sweet,  
 And grew disgustful to the king of kings,

Who shrank and turned his head away from her  
 Upon the couch because her breath was foul.  
 The monarch of Írán was grieved thereat,  
 His mind was troubled and his soul all care.  
 They summoned skilful leeches to Náhíd,  
 And one of them, a shrewd and prudent man,  
 Examined till he found a remedy—  
 A herb whereby the gullet is inflamed,  
 Called in the Rúman tongue “iskandar.” This  
 He rubbed upon the palate of the queen,  
 And caused her eyes<sup>1</sup> to water lustily.  
 The feter fled away, her palate burned,  
 Her face shone like brocade: but though the Fair  
 Was sweet as musk Dáráb had ceased to love her,  
 The monarch’s heart turned coldly from his bride,  
 And so he sent her back to Failakús.

She was with child but told not any one.

V. 1781 Nine months passed and from that fair dame was born  
 A babe like radiant Sol. She used to call him  
 Sikandar<sup>2</sup> since he was so tall, well favoured,  
 And sweet of breath, for she esteemed the name  
 Of what had sweetened her own palate lucky,  
 While Cæsar told each chief: “There hath appeared  
 A Cæsar of my seed.”

None named Dáráb,  
 Sikandar was the son and Cæsar sire,  
 For Cæsar shamed to say to any one:—  
 “Dáráb hath put away my child.”

What time  
 Sikandar’s holy mother brought him forth,  
 And one went to his grandsire with the tidings,  
 There was within the stable a brown mare,  
 In body lusty, swift and tall, and she  
 That very night produced a foal all white,  
 Short-shanked, and breasted like a lion. Cæsar

<sup>1</sup> Literally eyelashes.

<sup>2</sup> Sikandar = Iskandar.

Exulted o'er that mare because he deemed  
 That birth would prove a lucky sign for him.  
 He used at dawn to have the infant fetched,  
 Would have the trappings put upon the mare,  
 And then caress the foal on eyes and mane  
 Because it was coeval with Sikandar.

The sky revolved awhile with matters thus,  
 And years of varied fortune passed away,  
 Sikandar came to have a monarch's heart,  
 The utterance of heroes. Caesar held him  
 More dearly than a son and used to place  
 The due adornments on his martial breast.  
 He gained in wisdom, aptitude, good sense,  
 Weight, and intelligence. He was acknowledged  
 Successor on the throne to Failakús,  
 Who held him in regard in weal and woe.  
 He learned from tutors kings' accomplishments,  
 And thou hadst said that he was made to judge,  
 To found an empire, and to fill the throne.

Now when Náhid had gone back to her sire  
 Dáráb took unto him another wife,  
 And had by her a son of Grace divine  
 And puissance, and younger than Náhid's,  
 Named the same day Dára in hope that he  
 Might be yet more successful than his sire.

V. 1782

Thereafter, when twelve years had passed away,  
 The Sháh failed both in fortune and in limb:  
 Humái's illustrious offspring 'gan to fade,  
 And he was summoned to the other world.  
 He called to him the magnates and the sages,  
 Conversed at large about the throne of power,  
 And said to them: "Dára, son of Dáráb,  
 Now will become your leader in all good.  
 Give ear to him, perform what he commandeth  
 And be his will the music of your souls,  
 Because this throne of kingship lasteth not,

And when joy cometh it is soon recalled.  
Be instant ye, let love unite with justice,  
And think on me too gladly."

This he said,

And heaved a sigh. The colour of his cheek  
Turned from pomegranate-bloom to fenugreek.



## XIX

### DÁRÁ, SON OF DÁRÁB

HE REIGNED FOURTEEN YEARS

#### • ARGUMENT

After the death of Dáráb, his son Dárá ascends the throne and administers the realm. Meanwhile Failakús dies, and Sikandar succeeds him in Rúm. Dárá sends to demand tribute of Rúm, and Sikandar replies by invading Írán. He visits the camp of Dárá as his own ambassador, and is recognised, but escapes. Three great battles are fought, in which Dárá is defeated, and subsequently murdered by his own ministers. Sikandar finds Dárá mortally wounded, promises to carry out his last wishes, executes his murderers, and universally is recognised as Sháh.

#### NOTE

With Dárá we enter upon the historic period of the Sháhnáma.<sup>1</sup> In the last reign he was represented as being the younger son of Dáráb, with Sikandar for his elder brother. Historically, Dárá's prospect of ever becoming Sháh had been remote in the extreme. Artaxerxes Ochus, who had put Nectanebus to flight and conquered Egypt, was murdered in B.C. 338, with all his sons, by the eunuch Bagoas, with the exception of the youngest, Arsés, whom Bagoas made Sháh. Two years later Bagoas murdered him also, and all his family, and raised a distant collateral of the royal house to the throne, who is the Dárá of the Sháhnáma and the Darius Codomanus of Greek writers. Him too in his turn Bagoas tried to do away with, but was put to death himself instead. Historically, Dárá reigned six years, not fourteen.

§ 2. When Alexander was fourteen years old, his father Philip sent for Aristotle to become his son's tutor.

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 49.

For the tribute due from Rūm see p. 24. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions the ambassadors come in Philip's lifetime and are interviewed by Alexander.<sup>1</sup> The golden eggs are mentioned in the Syriac, which, with the Greek, also says that the ambassadors employed a painter to take Alexander's portrait, which they presented to Darius. The Syriac makes the further addition that Darius ordered the picture to be carried to his daughter Roxana, and their several heights to be compared, after which he flung it away in scorn, but Roxana secured it, honoured it greatly, and from that time fell in love with the original.<sup>2</sup>

Sikandar in the text is represented as beginning his expedition to the East by the invasion of Misr (Egypt), but a good deal happened first both in history and romance. Historically, he spent the first eighteen months of his reign in Greece, and crossed into Asia Minor in the spring of B.C. 334, where, having won the battle of the Granicus, he established his power sufficiently to allow him to advance through the passes into Syria. Having encountered and defeated Darius at Issus in the autumn of B.C. 333, he proceeded to make himself master of the coasts of Syria and Palestine, the sieges of Tyre and Gaza together taking about nine months, after which he invaded Egypt. Romantically, after the Granicus and Asia Minor, Alexander sails to Sicily and Italy, where he is well received by the Romans, who present him with a jewelled crown, thence voyages to Africa, where he interviews the Carthaginians, and proceeds by way of the oasis of Ammon to Egypt.<sup>3</sup>

§ 3. This corresponds with the Greek Pseudo-Callisthenes<sup>4</sup> and with the Syriac version<sup>5</sup> in general, but these texts add the picturesque incidents that, after Alexander's flight from the feast, the effigy of King Xerxes, which Darius loved, fell from the wall or ceiling of the banquet-hall, and that Alexander in his flight had to cross a frozen river, on which the ice gave way as he reached the other side, his horse being carried off by the current and drowned, while the pursuing Persians were unable to follow him across.

§§ 4-6. The Syriac version only mentions one battle between Alexander and Darius, at which both were present.<sup>6</sup> In the Shāhnāma there are three, of which the first corresponds with the one in the Syriac. According to Tabarī, who quotes Hisham bin Muḥammad, the two kings fought for a year in Mesopotamia.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MPC, Bk. i. c. 23; BHA, Bk. i. c. 23; BLEA, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> BHA, *id.* and i. 36, *cf.* note on § 8.

<sup>3</sup> MPC, i. 28-31.

<sup>4</sup> MPC, ii. 14, 15.

<sup>5</sup> BHA, ii. 6, 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* ii. 9.

<sup>7</sup> NAR. p. 42.

Firdausi places the scene of at least two of the battles of which he speaks to the west of the Euphrates. He was drawing probably from Arabic sources of information. The three battles cannot be regarded as in any way intended for those of the Granicus, of Issus, and of Gaugamela. The number is perhaps a tribute to the importance of the occasion.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Sháhnáma Dará*, after his final defeat, goes to Kirmán. According to the Pseudo-Callisthenes<sup>2</sup> and the Syriac version,<sup>3</sup> he withdrew to his palace, and next is heard of locally in connexion with Ekbatana and the Caspian Gates.<sup>4</sup> This is more accurate historically. Arrian says that Darius, after his defeat at Gaugamela (October 1st, B.C. 331), fled towards Media, rightly supposing that Alexander would march upon Susa and Babylon.<sup>5</sup>

§ 7. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes Darius, in his letter, asks for the return of his wife and family, offering land and treasures in exchange;<sup>6</sup> in the Syriac version he is ready to surrender everything if he may have mercy shown to him.<sup>7</sup> Alexander's reply is softened in the Persian. In the Greek and Syriac he takes the view that he is only recovering his own, Darius having been the aggressor, and in the latter makes no reply to him. Alexander's honourable treatment of Darius' family, whom he had taken at Issus, is a matter of history,<sup>8</sup> and the same sentiment toward them is preserved in the Pseudo-Callisthenes.

§§ 8-9. In the Greek and Syriac versions the letter to Porus is given at somewhat greater length. Darius invites Porus to meet him with an army at the Caspian Gates, and promises him half the spoil and Alexander's horse Bucephalus.<sup>9</sup> Porus, of which the Arabic form *Fúr* is used in the *Sháhnáma*, is a dynastic or family name, and represents the Pauravas who are mentioned in the *Mahábhárata* as reigning in the neighbourhood of Kashmir.<sup>10</sup> The Porus of Alexander's time ruled between the Hydaspes (Jhilam) and the Akesines (Chináb), and was allied to the king of Kashmir.

With regard to the death of Darius at the hands of two of his satraps,<sup>11</sup> the historical account is that, after Gaugamela, he went, accompanied by remnants of his broken army, to Ekbatana (Hamadán), where he endeavoured to raise fresh forces. Alexander, in the meantime, had made himself master of Babylon and Persopolis, and, hearing of Darius' doings, advanced northward

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. i. p. 349 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> MPC, ii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> BHA, Bk. ii. c. 9.

<sup>4</sup> MPC, ii. 19; BHA, ii. 11.

<sup>5</sup> DAA, iii. 16.

<sup>6</sup> MPC, ii. 17.

<sup>7</sup> BHA, ii. 9.

<sup>8</sup> DAA, ii. 12.

<sup>9</sup> MPC, ii. 19; BHA, ii. 11.

<sup>10</sup> DHA, iv. 399.

<sup>11</sup> MPC, ii. 20; BHA, ii. 12

against him in the spring of B.C. 330. Darius did not wait for Alexander's arrival, but left Ekbatana, intending to take refuge with his cousin Bessus, the satrap of Bactria. Darius went, of course, by the well-known route that connects western with eastern Iran.<sup>1</sup> He had considerable forces with him, but his counsels were distracted, and his troops gradually deserted him. Alexander reached Rai by forced marches from Ekbatana, but, hearing that Darius was far ahead, abandoned the pursuit, and rested for five days. He then resumed his march, and halted in the neighbourhood of Girduni Sirdarra, which appears to be the Caspian Gates of Arrian, passed through them the second day and heard, when encamped beyond them, that Darius was a prisoner in the hands of Bessus, the satrap of Bactria, of Barsaentes, the satrap of Arachosia and Drangiana (Sistán), and of Nabarzanes, the commander of Darius' cavalry. On this Alexander resumed the pursuit, and, four or five days later, came up with the fugitives, whereupon Nabarzanes and Barsaentes mortally wounded Darius and abandoned him. He was dead before Alexander reached him.<sup>2</sup> This was in July B.C. 330. Nabarzanes soon after surrendered to Alexander, and was pardoned.<sup>3</sup> Bessus and Barsaentes escaped to their own satrapies, where the former assumed royal state and the name of Artaxerxes. Ultimately both were captured and executed.<sup>4</sup> Their resistance to Alexander seems to have been a more serious crime than their removal of his chief opponent. An Arabic account<sup>5</sup> affirms that the death of Darius was brought about with the connivance of Alexander, and although Firdausí's version naturally omits this feature, it in other respects follows the Arabic very closely with regard to the scene between the two kings. The names of the two assassins are in the Pseudo-Callisthenes Bessus and Ariobarzanes,<sup>6</sup> in the Syriac version Bígiz and Ánábdeh, and in the Ethiopic Hášhish and Arsalás. The names in Firdausí seem to be of his own invention. The arrangement made between the two kings that Alexander should marry Roxana or Rúshanak appears in all the versions, and is not historical. She was not the daughter of Darius, but of Oxyartes, a Bactrian chief, whose stronghold Alexander escalated. He fell in love with her at sight, and married her,<sup>7</sup> B.C. 328. Subsequently, on his return from his

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. ii. p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> DA, iii. 19-21.

<sup>3</sup> HQC, vi. 5.

<sup>4</sup> DAA, iii. 25, 30.

<sup>5</sup> NAR, pp. 44, 50.

<sup>6</sup> Historically, there was a worthier holder of that name who, after Gaugamela, held the entrance to Párs against Alexander, and died, fighting to the last, outside Persepolis. HQC, v. 4.

<sup>7</sup> DA, iv. 19, cf. note on § 2.

Indian expedition, he did marry a daughter of Darius—Barsine or Stateira—at Susa in B.C. 324. Rūshanak, the Persian form of Roxana, is a diminutive from the adjective “rūshan,” bright.

For the feast of Sada *see* Vol. i. p. 123. Naurūz, New Year’s Day, was also the name of a feast then held. *Cf. id.* 74. For Mih: *see id.* 175 and *note*.

The corpse of Darius was sent to Pārs.<sup>1</sup> In the Romance the punishment of his assassins follows quickly. In the Greek, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions of it, Alexander announces his intention of “exalting” the doers of the deed, and so induces the culprits to declare themselves, who thereupon are “exalted” on the gibbet, set up over the grave of Darius.<sup>2</sup> Firdausi’s version relieves Sikandar from all imputation of sharp practice. In the Arabic account mentioned above, Alexander gives the murderers all that they bargained for, but they had forgotten to include their lives in the compact, and are put to death.

§ 10. Sikandar’s proclamation to the Persians and his correspondence with the women-folk of Dārā appear in the other versions,<sup>3</sup> but the correspondence is reserved for the next reign. Here we have a message only. The passage about the handmaids in Firdausi’s version of the proclamation runs in the Syriac: “And we command that damsels . . . shall enter into the temple of the god whom my mother Olympias worships, for the space of one year for the service of the gods; and when they have arrived at the age for marriage, they shall go forth from the ministry, and shall receive a dowry of five thousand dinārs from the treasury of the god, and shall marry.” Expressions in Firdausi’s version show that it came to him, in part at least, through the Arabic.

<sup>1</sup> DAA, iii. 22. For the accounts given in the Greek, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, *see* MPC, ii. 21; BHA, ii. 13; BLEA, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* and *seq.*

## § 1

*How Dárá harangued the Chiefs and took Order  
for the Realm*<sup>1</sup>

- V. 1783 Dárá, when he had ceased to mourn Dáráb,  
Exalted to the sun the Kaian crown.  
He was a man of action, young, and lusty :  
A sword was blunt contrasted with his tongue.  
He took his seat upon the throne and said :—  
· Ye princes, noble chiefs, and warriors !  
I want not any that hath fallen low,  
Nor will I summon such to crown and state,  
And if one disobeyeth my commands,  
Let not his body count its head its own,  
While if he hath disloyalty at heart,  
That will I frustrate with the scimitar.  
If others too have wealth 'tis not for me  
To vex their happy hearts on that account,  
And shall I wish for any as a guide,  
Who am myself the guide and gladdener ?  
Sun, fortune, and the right to fealty  
Are mine, mine greatness, kingship, and command.”  
He summoned unto him a ready writer,  
And held talk with him of affairs at large.  
That worthy wrote a letter from Dárá.  
Son of Dáráb, son of Bahman.<sup>2</sup> Wherever  
Reigned independent kings the Sháh commanded  
To send a letter trenchant as a sword :—  
V. 1784 “ Whoever turneth him from my behest,  
And rede, shall mark how I will scatter heads.  
Give all obedience whether I command  
To take another's life or yield your own.”  
He opened up his father's treasure-board,

<sup>1</sup> This heading is not in the original.

<sup>2</sup> Dárá and Ardshir in the original. See Vol. v. pp. 282, 297 *note*.

Called out the troops, and gave allowances.  
 The stipend varied from four drachms to eight ;  
 This had a cupful, that a basonful.  
 He gave moreover drachms, dīnārs, and bards,  
 As well as breastplates, swords, and massive maces,  
 Appointing veteran chiefs to provinces.  
 To one among the notables the marches,  
 And largessing the troops with things of price.  
 Ambassadors arrived from every quarter,  
 From every man of name and potentate,  
 From Hind, from the Faghfūr, the Khān of Chín,  
 From Rúm and likewise from the provinces.  
 Each of them carried tribute, dues, and gifts,  
 For none could stand or strive against Dārā.

He built a city which he named Zarnúsh—  
 A cause of much rejoicing in Ahwáz.  
 He gave to every mendicant his due,  
 And freely unto those that came to sue.

## § 2

*The Death of Failakús and Sikandar's Accession  
 to the Throne*

In those days was the death of Failakús—  
 A cause of trouble for a while in Rúm ;  
 Then sat Sikandar on his grandsire's throne,  
 Sought virtue, and restrained the hands of evil.  
 For in those days there lived one known to fame  
 In Rúm, a joy to all that land and hight  
 The erudite Arastáilís<sup>1</sup>—a man  
 Of wisdom, vigilance, and influence.  
 That sage adviser came before Sikandar,  
 And, as he took his place, held forth, and said :—

<sup>1</sup> Arastáilís in the original. Firdausi uses both forms, and there are others.

"O ruler happy in thy full desire!  
 By acting as thou dost thou wilt abate  
 Thy fame because the royal throne hath looked  
 On many such as thee but will not rest  
 V. 1785 With any. When thou sayest: 'I have gained  
 Mine end and need not any to direct me,'  
 Know that there is no greater fool than thou,  
 If thou wilt hearken not the rede of sages.  
 We are from dust, are destined from our birth  
 To go back thither, and must needs submit;  
 But thou wilt live in fame if thou art good,  
 And be successful on the throne of kings,  
 While from ill-doing thou wilt reap but ill,  
 And never pass a night of peaceful sleep.  
 Well-doing is a monarch's adjutant,  
 And none hath won good days by doing wrong."

Whenas Sikandar heard he was well pleased,  
 And used to court the speaker's company,  
 Did every act according as he bade  
 In fight and festival, in war and strife,  
 Bestowed new favours on him every day,  
 And, when he came, would seat him on the throne.

It chanced one day that an ambassador,  
 A Persian shrewd of heart and eloquent,  
 Came from Dárâ to Rûm to ask for tribute  
 Due from that prosperous land. He came and spake  
 About it to Sikandar who was irked  
 By reason of that tribute and old tax,  
 And said to him: "Go say before Dárâ:—  
 'Our tribute now hath lost its hue and scent,  
 For since the bird that laid the golden eggs  
 Is dead the tribute is no more in force.'"

The ambassador, on hearing such an answer,  
 Was frightened and was seen no more in Rûm.  
 Sikandar summoned all his troops and told  
 Of what had passed. He said: "The well-disposed



'Scape not the revolutions of the sky.  
 I have to tread the world's face and account  
 Much weal and woe, so now ye must make ready,  
 And banish home and country from your hearts."

He oped his grandsire's hoards and bade his troops V. 1786  
 Prepare. At dawn the war-cry rose from Rûm  
 Both from the city and the young king's court.  
 The standard that was carried after him  
 Was red inscribed upon a turquoise ground.  
 He started on his march by way of Misr,  
 With troops and trumpets, drums and warriors.  
 The king of Misr with hostile troops forthwith  
 Went to encounter him. The armies met  
 And fought for seven days, but on the eighth  
 Misr was o'erthrown, Sikandar cut them off,  
 And at a blow enough were taken captive  
 To paralyse the taker's hands. Of maces,  
 Steeds and horse-armour, jupons, Indian daggers,  
 Of golden girdles, silvern harness, swords  
 Of Misr with golden scabbards, of brocade  
 And of dînars, he compassed such a store  
 That e'en the beasts of burden could not bear it,  
 While multitudes of noble warriors,  
 Of chiefs and cavaliers, came in for quarter.  
 Sikandar thence made ready to invade  
 Írán, took lions' hearts and warriors' hands.  
 Now when Dārā had heard: "A host hath marched  
 From Rûm and reached our borders and confines,"  
 So great an army issued from Istakhr,  
 That e'en the wind was hampered by the spears.  
 He purposed to advance on Rûm from Pârs.  
 And fire the peopled parts. When he had led  
 His troops more many than the blades of grass  
 To the Farât he drew up on the shore,  
 And none could see the stream for armature. V. 1787

## § 3

*How Sikandar went as his own Ambassador to Dárá*

Now when Sikandar heard : " The host hath come,"  
 He marched to meet it, and when two leagues' space  
 Was left between he called to him the magnates,  
 Who spake with him at large about Dárá  
 Until, outworn by his advisers' words,  
 He said : " There is one way and only one—  
 That I should go as an ambassador  
 To him and weigh his state."

He bade to fetch

A girdle decked with jewels fit for kings,  
 And royal robe embroidered. They brought forth  
 A led horse all betrapped with gold. A sword  
 Hung from its saddle in a golden scabbard.  
 Sikandar chose ten Rúman cavaliers,  
 Men good at parleying, and left the host  
 At dawn with those ten famed interpreters.  
 As soon as he approached the exalted Sháh  
 He lighted from his steed and did obeisance.  
 Dárá, the world-lord, called him, greeted him,  
 And seated him below the throne. The courtiers,  
 Amazed, invoked the Maker of the world,  
 Such were Sikandar's aspect, Grace, and prudence,  
 His stature, limbs, and dignity ! He took  
 His seat but rose forthwith, delivered well  
 Sikandar's message, blessing first the king,  
 And said : " For ever may the crowned head live.  
 Thus said Sikandar : ' O illustrious,  
 Whose will prevaileth everywhere on earth !  
 I have no wish to fight against the Sháh,  
 Or sojourn in Írán. Mine aim is this—  
 To roam about the earth a little space,  
 And see the world for once. My whole intent

Is good and honest, and especially  
 Since thou art now the ruler of Írán.  
 If thou forbiddest me to use the ground  
 I cannot travel in the air like clouds,  
 But thou, unwitting of my purposes,  
 Hast met me in this fashion with a host.  
 If thou wilt fight then I will fight with thee.  
 And not depart without a stricken field.  
 Choose for thyself the season for the fray.  
 And hold thereto: let not thy purpose change,  
 Because I shrink not from a war with chiefs,  
 However great their host."

Now when Dárá  
 Observed his counsel, courage, eloquence,  
 His Grace and bearing, so that thou hadst said:—  
 "It is Dárá<sup>1</sup> upon the ivory throne  
 With armlets, torque, with Grace and crown," he  
 asked:—

"What is thy name and stock because thy Grace  
 And limbs denote a king? Thou art no subject.  
 Methinketh that thou art thyself Sikandar.  
 Thee with thy Grace and stature, speech and face,  
 Heaven peradventure nurtured for a throne."

Sikandar answered: "None hath acted thus  
 In peace or war, and men of eloquence—  
 The crown of all the sages of the world—  
 Are not so lacking at Sikandar's portal  
 That he should take a message from himself,<sup>2</sup>  
 And he so great a king, the people's head?  
 Sikandar's wit is not of such a sort  
 That he should pass from his forefathers' ways.  
 This was the message that my master gave me,  
 And I have told the Sháh his words."

They lodged him

<sup>1</sup> Dárá = Dáráb here perhaps.

<sup>2</sup> Or, with stop at "portal." "How should he," &c.

In fitting state. The monarch of Írán,  
As soon as they had spread the board, commanded  
The chamberlain: "Invite the ambassador."

V. 1789      Forthwith they summoned him and gave to him  
The envoys' seat. They eat and then prepared  
To revel, calling out for wine and harp  
And minstrelsy, but as Sikandar drained  
The pleasant wine he lightly laid each goblet  
Within his lap till as the cups and wine  
Passed round and round their sum passed reckoning.  
The server came before Dárá and said:—

"The guest to-day hath cottoned to the cups!"

The Sháh bade: "Ask him: Why dost thou thus  
tender  
The wine-cups?"

Said the server: "Kingly man!  
Why keep these golden cups upon thy lap?"

Sikandar made him this reply: "These cups,  
Are, my good sir, the envoy's perquisite.  
If such be not the usage in Írán  
Restore them to the royal treasury."

The monarch smiled to hear of such a custom,  
And bade to set within the envoy's hand  
A goblet filled with jewels fit for kings,  
And lay a ruby on the top thereof.  
Just at that moment those that went to make  
Demand for tribute from the land of Rúm  
Came from outside within the banquet-hall,  
Advancing toward the Sháh with measured tread.  
He that was envoy recognised Sikandar,  
Went to the Sháh, and did obeisance, saying:—  
"This is Sikandar—Cæsar's self—who hath  
The throne, the mace, and diadem! What time  
The Sháh commanded us to go and ask  
For tribute he was wroth, entreated us  
With scorn, and spake of war with thee, while we

Had to escape by night and urge our steeds.  
 We saw not any like to him in Rúm.  
 Now boldly hath he come within thy borders  
 To weigh thy host, thy treasure, throne, and crown."

The Sháh, on hearing what his envoy said,  
 Gazed at Sikandar yet more earnestly,  
 Who apprehended what it was they spake  
 In secret to the monarch of the world,  
 But waited till the day was growing darker,  
 And sunlight was declining in the west,  
 Then gained the entrance of the Sháh's pavilion,  
 And mounted boldly, saying to his horsemen,  
 His fortunate and noble followers:—

V. 1790

"Our lives are now dependent on our steeds.  
 And if they fail us we shall grasp the wind."

Then he and all his meiny plied the spur,  
 And fled forth from the monarch of the world.  
 Who missed Sikandar's head and coronet,  
 Then lost amid night's gloom, and sent his guards  
 At once to seek his foeman in his tent.  
 They went to find that wary one departed,  
 So sleepy was the fortune of the Sháh!  
 Dára dispatched a thousand cavaliers,  
 Bold fighters, in pursuit as swift as wind.  
 But in the dark they lost their way, beheld  
 The outposts of the foe, and turned unguerdoned  
 Save with the travail of their longsome journey.

Now when Sikandar reached his own encampment  
 The warriors of Rúm approached and found  
 Their king well pleased that night. "There is," they  
 cried,

"A cup of gems before him!"

Said Sikandar:—

"Hail and exult in this our glorious omen,  
 For this cup is the triumph of my life;  
 The stars themselves are subject to me now.

I have obtained the number of the foe ;  
 Their horsemen are much fewer than we heard.  
 Draw, all of you, your falchions for the fray,  
 Advance and quit the desert and the plain.  
 If in this fight ye give yourselves to toil,  
 The toil shall both enrich you and content you.  
 The Maker of the world is mine ally,  
 And fortune's head is lying on my breast."

The mighty men called blessings down on him.  
 And said : " May all the earth rejoice in Cæsar,  
 And may our souls and bodies be thy ransom :  
 To that we pledge ourselves for evermore.

V. 1791 For who among the kings can vie with thee  
 In stature, goodliness, and bravery ? "

#### § 4

*How Dárá fought with Sikandar and was worsted*

Now when the sun rose o'er the Raven's back,  
 And earth grew as it were a lamp aflame,  
 Dárá, the world-lord, led his army forth ;  
 The world drew o'er its head a veil of pitch.  
 He marched his army on from the Farát,  
 And men were more than grass-blades on the plain.  
 Whenas Sikandar heard : " A host hath come,"  
 He beat the kettledrums and marched to fight.  
 What with the jupons and the Indian swords,  
 The steeds and armour both for man and horse,  
 The baggage and the warriors on both sides,  
 Earth seemed a sea, and dust rose mountain-high.  
 Both hosts drew up for battle, and the falchions  
 Flashed in the sun. They led the elephants  
 Before the army, and the world became  
 As 'twere the river Nile. The cavaliers  
 Were in the rear, the elephants in front,

And all men ceased to set their hearts on life.  
 Thou wouldst have said: "Air is blood-clamouring,  
 And earth is rocking underneath the cry!"  
 So loudly sounded horn and Indian bell  
 That all men's hearts were moved and therewithal,  
 What with the neighing of the steeds, the shouts  
 Of captains, and crash of massive maces,  
 Thou wouldst have said: "Earth is a mount of war,  
 And heaven with flying dust an Ethiop's face!"

For one whole week those valiant warriors  
 Confronted. On the eighth day rose a murk  
 Of dust such that the sun turned azure-dim,  
 And veiled the Íránians' eyes, who saw but dust  
 Upon the battlefield. Dárá, the world-lord,  
 Turned with his noble host of warriors.

The army reached the banks of the Farát.  
 Retreating in confusion from the field.

V. 1792

Sikandar's troops pursued them: of those hosts  
 One was o'erwhelmed with sorrow, one o'erjoyed.  
 Sikandar pressed on to the river-bank:  
 They slew Íránians innumerable,  
 But turned back at the river: he forbade  
 To cross and occupied victoriously  
 The battlefield with his picked soldiery.

## § 5

*How Dárá fought with Sikandar the second Time.*

Whenas Dárá had fled before Sikandar  
 He sent off cavaliers on every side  
 In haste and called the chieftains of Írán  
 And of Túrán. He gave out pay, he summoned  
 The commissaries and, by next new moon,  
 Reorganised the troops and filled with bluster  
 The chieftains' heads. Again he crossed the river

And ranged his army on the spacious plain.  
 Sikandar, hearing this, marched forth ; he went  
 To meet Dára and left behind his baggage.  
 When those two hosts encountered, earth and time  
 Contended too. They battled for three days  
 Till all the field was straitened by the slain.  
 Vast numbers of the Íránians perished there,  
 The day was lost to the aspiring Sháh,  
 Who turned in anguish from the battlefield  
 When sun and moon alike refused him aid.  
 Sikandar followed swift as flying dust,  
 Invoking much the Maker of the world.  
 A proclamation went forth to the troops :—  
 ' Ye subjects who are wandering astray !  
 There is no fear that I shall injure you.  
 And ye are no concernment to my troops.

V. 1793

Abide in safety in your own abodes,  
 And trust your persons and your lives to God.  
 Ye have escaped the Rúmans safe and sound,  
 Although ye have imbrued your hands in blood."

The soldiers' quarter being granted, turned  
 Their faces toward the Rúmans, while Sikandar  
 Went on the battlefield, collected all  
 The spoil and gave it to his troops. His army  
 Was all equipped anew. They stayed awhile  
 Upon the field till king and hosts were rested.

Dára the world-lord, reached Chahram where lay  
 His treasures' key. The chiefs all came to him,  
 Fulfilled with sorrow, misery, and anguish.  
 There sire lamented seeing not his son,  
 And son in like wise, seeing not his sire ;  
 The country of Írán was full of wailing,  
 And tears like hailstones were in every eye.  
 Then from Chahram he journeyed to Istakhr—  
 The Persians' glory. Envoys went on all sides  
 To all the chieftains and the paladins.



The soldiers mustered at the royal palace.  
 They set a golden throne for Shāh Dārā  
 And when he sat upon that seat of gold  
 The nobles, faithful still to him, drew nigh,  
 And he harangued the Irānians : ‘ O ye chiefs,  
 Ye men of wisdom, Lions, warriors !  
 Consider now our course.’

He spake in anguish.

And wept awhile, then added : “ Better die  
 To-day with fame than live while Rūmans triumph.  
 Of old our ancestors and Shāhs took tribute  
 Each year from them : Rūm was submissive in all  
 To us ; but now the Persians’ fortune loureth,  
 Sikandar hath possessed him of all kingship,  
 Become world-lord hath compassed throne and crown,  
 And will not pause, but presently be here .  
 All Pārs will be as ’twere a sea of blood  
 Men, women, children will be taken captive,  
 And neither young nor old left in the land.  
 If ye will give me aid I will avert  
 This anguish, travail, and calamity.  
 The Rūmans used to be our nobles’ quarry,  
 They used to be in terror of Irān,  
 But we are now the quarry, they the leopards  
 And in each battle we forsake the field.  
 Yet still if ye will struggle back to back  
 Ye shall renew your clutch upon their land  
 But if one showeth slackness in the fight,  
 And striveth not to hazard his own life,  
 Abandon hope of this world in that Rūm  
 Is the Zahhāk and we are the Jamshīd.”<sup>1</sup>

He spake in tears with anguish in his heart :  
 His lips were livid and his cheeks were wan.  
 The prudent nobles rose to make reply .  
 A mournful wail ascended from the court :—

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 139.

“We would not have the world without the Sháh.  
 We all will face the conflict, make the world  
 Strait to our foes, and bind our skirts together <sup>1</sup>  
 For conquest or the grave.”

Of all that coast  
 He paid and armed the leaders and the host.

## § 6

*How Sikandar fought with Dárá the third Time, and how  
 Dárá fled to Kirmán*

Sikandar, ware of what Dárá was doing,  
 And how he had become upon the throne  
 The moon's own diadem, led from 'Irák  
 His powers while all invoked on him God's blessing.  
 His army had no middle and no end ;  
 Dárá's good fortune was not young withal,  
 But still the Sháh prepared to meet his foe,  
 And led so vast an army from Istakhr  
 V 1795 That thou hadst said : “The earth can not sustain them,  
 And heaven itself will have not room to turn !”  
 Both kings arrayed the forces of both realms,  
 They all had spear and mace and sword in hand.  
 And such a shout ascended from both hosts  
 As split the ears of heaven. The earth became  
 A sea of warriors' blood, and all the field  
 Of battle was o'erstrewn with headless trunks,  
 Paternal love itself grew pitiless,  
 And heaven revolved indifferent to all.  
 Night came, Dárá was worsted, while Sikandar  
 Was girding up his loins for fresh assaults.  
 The Sháh fell back upon Kirmán and thus  
 Escaped alive the clutches of his foe ;  
 Meanwhile Sikandar reached Istakhr of Párs—

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. iv. p. 85 and note.

The crown of Sháhs, the glory of that land.  
 A proclamation went up at the courtgate :—  
 ‘ Ye noble men and showers of the way !  
 Whoe’er desireth quarter for his life,  
 And is a penitent before his God,  
 Shall be ’neath my protection, one and all,  
 And know it if they are but true to me.  
 All that are wounded will we recompense,  
 And likewise cease to shed our foemen’s blood.  
 We will forbear the goods of private folk,  
 And make our wisdom manifest. Since God,  
 The Conqueror, hath given us Grace divine,  
 With greatness and the imperial diadem,  
 A man had better trample on the neck  
 Of dragons than transgress our ordinance.”

Whatever spoil was taken on the field  
 Sikandar shared in full among his troops.

When from Írán Dárá had reached Kirmán  
 He missed the more part of the Íránian chiefs.  
 A wail rose from amid the troops. They saw  
 Not any one with helmet on his head.  
 Dárá assembled all the great and wise.  
 All those who had been with him in the fight.  
 They came together grievously lamenting.  
 And burning at the evil of their lot.

Thus spake Dárá : ‘ We verily have brought  
 Heaven’s wrath upon ourselves. None in the world  
 E’er hath experienced such discomfiture,  
 Or heard of such from statists of old time.  
 The wives and children of Írán are captives,  
 Our souls are hurt by fate, our flesh by arrows.  
 What are your views and what device have ye  
 To make our enemy repent hereof ?  
 We have no realm, no city, throne or crown,  
 No kingship, children, treasury or host,  
 And we are ruined if God pity not !”

The chiefs that still survived wept bitterly  
 Before Dárá, and cried : " We all, O king !  
 Are stricken by the evil of the time.  
 The matter is beyond the host's endeavours,  
 The waves have risen higher than our heads.  
 The sire is sonless and the son is sireless,  
 For so revolving heaven hath decreed.  
 Our mothers and our sisters and our daughters  
 Are all within the clutches of Sikandar,  
 While all the ladies of thy family,  
 Who trembled for thy safety, all the wealth  
 Transmitted by thy noble ancestors,  
 Whereto thou wast the undisputed heir,  
 The royal offspring and the Kaians' treasure.  
 Are in possession of thine enemies.  
 No longer can we stand against our foe  
 To battle with him in the way of fight.  
 Complete submission is our one resource,  
 For none can keep the crown of majesty,  
 And this same turning sky is passing too  
 O'er him as every man of wisdom knoweth.  
 Present thyself in person as his liege,  
 And make thy court with many flatteries.  
 Then shall we see how matters will result,  
 For heaven's process is beyond our ken.  
 So write a letter unto him and fill  
 His gloomy soul with thought because the man  
 Whose tongue is bright with knowledge will make shift  
 To pluck up evil from its base."

V. 1797

Dárá,

On hearing this, announced his own intent—  
 One in accord to royal precedent.

## § 7

*How Dárá wrote to Sikandar to propose Peace*

The Sháh then called a veteran scribe who brought  
 His paper and musk-scented ink. The Sháh,  
 In pain and grief, with livid checks and eyes  
 Fulfilled with tears of blood, wrote from Dárá.  
 Son of Dáráb, son of Bahman, a letter  
 To lion-capturing Sikandar Cæsar.  
 He first gave praises to the Omnipotent.  
 The Author of his good and evil fortune,  
 Then said : " Assuredly the sage himself  
 Will not escape the process of the sky  
 Whereby we are made joyful and appalled,  
 At whiles exalted and at whiles abased.  
 The battles of our hosts turned not on valour,  
 But on the processes of sun and moon.  
 What was to be hath been. Our heart is sore :  
 What hath yon azure vault in store for us ?  
 If heart-repentant now for having sought  
 The fray, thou wilt consent to terms, the treasures  
 Both of Gushtásp and of Asfandiyár.  
 The earrings and the armlets and the torques.  
 With all that we ourselves have gained, will I  
 Dispatch now from our treasury to thine.  
 Moreover I will aid thee in thy wars,  
 And when thou shalt be instant will not lag.  
 As for my wives and children, now thy captives,  
 I should not deem their restoration strange.  
 They who would rule the world must not be vengeful.  
 And from revenge on women mighty kings  
 Get nothing but reproach. The lord of wisdom,  
 Who hearkeneth to knowledge, having read  
 What I have written will improve thereon."

V. 1798

A cameleer departed from Kirmán  
 In all haste to Sikandar, the arch foe,  
 Who, when he had perused the letter, said :—  
 " May wisdom be the consort of his soul !  
 Whoever injureth his family.  
 His ladies or the children of his house,  
 Shall see no throne except a coffin-board,  
 Or dangle from the branches of a tree.  
 I will not trouble any in Írán,  
 And God forbid that we should take their treasures.  
 If thou returnest to Írán 'tis well ;  
 The sovereignty is altogether thine.  
 What thou commandest ne'er will I transgress,  
 And draw no breath unless advised by thee."  
 The camel voyaged homeward vessel-wise,  
 Dárá was filled with anguish, heart and eyes.

2

## § 8

*How Dárá was slain by his Ministers*

- V. 1799 Dárá, when he had read that answer, mused  
 In wonder at the process of the world.  
 At last he said : "'Tis worse than to be slain  
 For me to gird myself before the Rúman.  
 A grave is better for me than disgrace,  
 For, as a wise man said in this regard :—  
 When any river riseth in its pride  
 A drop of rain is viewless in the tide.'  
 I used to succour every one in war.  
 But, since disaster hath befallen me,  
 I see not any helper in the world,  
 And I have none to cry to, saving God."  
 As there was no one far or near to help  
 He wrote to Fúr a humble, flattering letter

In deep distress and, having first of all  
 Praised God, said : " Ruler of the men of Hind,  
 Thou man of wisdom, rede, and ardent soul !  
 Thou surely must have heard of my misfortune :  
 Sikandar hath led forth a host from Rúm :  
 No crops or settlements or kin or children.  
 Or crown or throne or royal diadem,  
 Or treasury or host are left to us.  
 Now if thou wilt help me to keep away  
 Destruction from myself I will dispatch  
 So many gems to thee out of my treasures  
 That never shalt thou need to toil for more.  
 Moreover thou shalt be renowned on earth,  
 And held in honour by the great."

He sent

Like wind a cameleer who came to Fúr,  
 The scion of the race of Fúrs.

Sikandar,

On hearing what Dárá, son of Dáráb,  
 Had done, bade blow the trumpet. There arose  
 The din of kettledrum and Indian bell.  
 Sikandar from Istakhr led forth such powers  
 That Sol was lost in heaven. Dárá too marched  
 For his part, and his Grace renewed the world.  
 The war-cry rose from both sides and the troops  
 Had little rest. Sikandar ranged his host,  
 The air grew dark, earth viewless. When Dárá  
 Led forth his troops—no army bent on strife,  
 But broken-hearted and grown sick of war—  
 The fortune of the Íránians drooped its head.  
 They closed not with the Rúmans hand to hand ;  
 They were the fox, the Rúmans were the lion,  
 And all the chiefs asked quarter, having come  
 Down from their pride to deep humility.  
 Dárá saw, turned away, and fled lamenting.  
 With him there went three hundred cavaliers—

V. 1800

The noblest of Írán. He had withal  
 Two ministers of high degree, who used  
 To comrade him in fight. The name of one—  
 An archimage—was Máhiyár, the other  
 Was called Jánúsiyár. These twain, on seeing  
 Their efforts fruitless and the star erewhile  
 So lofty, and the glory, of Dárá  
 Thus set, held talk and said: "This luckless man  
 Henceforth will see not crown and throne again:  
 We needs must poniard him upon the breast,  
 Or smite his head with Indian sword. Sikandar  
 Will give to us a province. We shall be  
 A crown upon the kingdom."

Both of them,

One minister, the other treasurer,  
 Went with the Sháh; Jánúsiyár, the chief,  
 Upon the left hand, Máhiyár to right.  
 Night gloomed, a storm arose, Jánúsiyár  
 Laid hand upon a dagger, stabbed the king  
 Upon the breast, that famed head reached its fall,  
 And then the troops deserted, one and all.

### § 9

*How Dárá told his last Wishes to Sikandar and died*

The ministers came to Sikandar, saying:—  
 "O Sháh victorious and endowed with knowledge!  
 We have surprised and slain thine enemy;  
 The crown and throne of chiefs are his no more."  
 Sikandar, having heard Jánúsiyár,  
 Said thus to Máhiyár: "Where is the foe  
 Whom thou hast overthrown? Show me the way."  
 The two led on. The Rúman's heart and soul  
 Were filled with rage and grief. On drawing nigh



He gazed upon Dárá and saw his breast  
All blood, his countenance like fenugreek,  
Gave orders to alight and set a guard  
O'er those two ministers. and then, dismounting  
As swift as wind himself, took on his lap  
The wounded monarch's head and, tarrying  
Until the stricken should begin to speak,  
Chafed with his hands the visage of Dárá,  
Removing from the head the royal crown,  
Unclassing from the breast the warrior's mail,  
While showering tears on him because no leech  
Was then at hand to tend upon the wounded,  
And saying: "All yet shall be well with thee:  
It is thy foemen's hearts that shall be wrung.  
Arise and seat thee on this golden litter,  
Or, if thou hast the strength, mount on thy steed.  
I will have leeches brought to thee from Hind  
And Rúm, and mourn thy pain with tears of blood.  
I will resign to thee the realm and throne.  
When thou art better we will pack and go,  
But these that thus have wronged thee will I hang  
Head-downward from two gibbets presently.  
When yesterday these two old men informed me  
My heart flowed over, and I cried aloud,  
Because we twain are of one root and piece:  
Why for ambition should we wreck our race?"

Dárá, on hearing this, began to speak,  
And said: "May wisdom always be thy mate.  
Sure am I that thou wilt be recompensed  
By God, the all-holy Judge, for these thy words;  
But as for what thou said'st: 'Írán is thine,  
Thine are the crown and throne's seat of the brave,'  
Death is much nearer to me than the throne;  
'Tis quit of ruined men. High heaven so willet, h,  
Whose joy is travail and whose profit loss.  
Beware of saying: 'I by mine own might

Prevailed o'er this famed people.' Know that good  
 And ill are both of God, and while thou livest  
 Give Him the praise. I illustrate my words,  
 And am a sign to all. What majesty,  
 Kingship, and wealth were mine! I injured none.  
 What arms, what troops withal, what noble steeds,  
 What thrones and crowns, what children, what allies:  
 Allies! My brand was burnt upon their hearts!  
 Then earth and time were bondslaves in my presence,  
 And thus it was while fortune proved my friend.  
 Then by this token I grew quit of good.  
 And captive in the hands of murderers;  
 I had no hope in children or in kin,  
 The world was darkened and mine eyes were glazed.  
 Of all my kindred there is none to help me;  
 My sole hope is in Him who giveth all.  
 Thus stricken am I lying in the dust;  
 The world hath got me in the net of ruin.  
 Such is the custom of this turning sky  
 Alike with monarch and with paladin:  
 All kingship too departeth in the end;  
 It is the quarry and the hunter death."

Sikandar wept blood-drops upon the Sháh,  
 Thus stricken in the dust, who at the sight  
 Of all that heart-felt grief and tears o'erflowing  
 His pallid cheeks, said: "Weep not, tears are vain.  
 The smother is my portion of the fire.  
 He that bestowed so much on me, and fortune  
 That so illumed me, have apportioned this.  
 Now give thine ear to this my last request,  
 Receive and keep it wisely in thy heart."

Sikandar said to him: "'Tis thine to bid:  
 Say what thou wilt; I pledge to thee my word."

V. 1803

Dará spake quickly and recounted all  
 His last requests, beginning thus: "O chief!  
 Fear thou the almighty Ruler of the world.

For He created the heaven, the earth, and time.  
 The mighty and the weak. Protect my children,  
 My kindred, and the consorts that I love :  
 Ask me for my chaste daughter as thy wife,  
 And let her share thy throne in happiness.  
 Her mother used to call her Rúshanak,  
 And made the world both glad and fair to her.  
 Thou wilt have no reproaches from my child,  
 Nor any jibings from the ill-disposed,  
 For kings have nurtured her, and she is fit  
 In rede to be the crown upon the noble.  
 Thou mayst see born to her a youthful prince  
 Who will revive the name Asfandiyár,  
 Relume the altar of Zarduhsht, take up  
 The Zandavasta, heed the presages.  
 The feast of Sada and the Fanes of Fire,  
 With glorious Naurúz, Urmuzd, and Mihr,  
 And lave his soul and face in wisdom's stream.  
 Restore the customs of Luhrásp and follow  
 The doctrine of Gushtásp, maintain both high  
 And low in their degree, illume the Faith,  
 And see good days."

Sikandar made reply :—

"O monarch of kind heart and honest speech !  
 I do accept thy rede and last requests.  
 And I will tarry in thy borders only  
 To compass these good matters, and herein  
 Take wisdom for my guide."

The world-lord grasped

Sikandar's hand, began to wail, then pressed  
 The palm upon his mouth, and said : "Be God  
 Thy refuge. I resign my place to thee,  
 Depart to dust, and give my soul to Him."

He spake, his soul passed, and folk wept him sorely. V. 1804  
 Sikandar rent his garments and strewed dust  
 Upon the Kaian throne. Then for Dárá,

According to the custom of his race,  
 And honouring his Glory and his Faith,  
 Sikandar built a charnel-house. They washed  
 The monarch's blood away with clear rose-water,  
 Now that the time of endless sleep was come,  
 And draped him in brocade of Rúm; the pattern  
 Was all in jewelry, the ground was gold.  
 The corpse was hid by camphor; none beheld  
 Dará's face more. They set within the charnel  
 A golden throne, o'erhead a crown of musk,  
 And laid him out upon a golden bier,  
 While every eye rained blood, then lifting it  
 They passed it on from hand to hand. Sikandar  
 Preceded it afoot, went too the nobles,  
 Their eyes all charged with blood, and thus he fared  
 Until the rites were o'er, and thou hadst said:—  
 'His very skin hath burst.'

When he had placed

The Sháh's bier on the throne, had gone the way  
 Of royal precedent, left that grand charnel,  
 And made the lofty portals fast without,  
 He set a gibbet for Jánúsiyár,  
 With one for Máhiyár of equal size.  
 And hung those miscreants alive thereon—  
 Those regicides—head downward. From the host  
 Came warriors with stone in hand and slew them  
 Upon the gibbet all despiteously:  
 So perish every slayer of a king!

Now when the Íránians saw how much Sikandar  
 Was troubled for the Sháh—that noble man—  
 They all of them began to laud his worth,  
 And hailed him as the ruler of the earth.

## § 10

*How Sikandar wrote to the Nobles of Írán*

One left Kirmán to go to Ispahán,  
Wherein the Íránian chieftains were assembled.  
One too—a man of high authority—  
Approached the women-folk of Sháh Dárá,  
Gave greetings on Sikandar's part, recounted  
All that had happened to Dárá, and then  
Spake thus: "The hearts of foe and friend alike  
Rejoice not at the death of lawful Sháhs.  
Know ye to-day then that I am Dárá.  
If he is hidden I am manifest,  
And greater favours are in store for you.  
There is no cause to rend your hearts with grief:  
We all are born to death, both Sháh and host:  
It is the sole way though thou tarry long.  
Convey your havings to Istakhr and gain  
New glory by affinity to us.  
Írán is now as ever it hath been;  
May health of body and glad hearts be yours."

V. 1805

They wrote to every province, prince, and peer  
As from Sikandar, son of Failakús.  
The great, the lord of earth and dread of foes  
A letter to the kinglike potentates,  
Brave cavaliers and ready for the fray.  
He sent withal a letter to the archmagés.  
All brilliancy, excuse, and compliment.  
This was the heading: "From the king of Kaians  
To all the administrators of Írán,"  
And, when the pen of Chín had dipped in ink  
Gris-ambered, first there came the praise of God.  
"The righteous Judge, the Maker of the world,  
And things invisible and visible.

Both worlds were made by His creative word :  
 Thou canst not call in question His decree.  
 The sky, which thou beholdest thus revolving  
 Will, while it lasteth, never scape His ken.  
 Whate'er He willeth is at His command ;  
 We all are slaves and He is sovereign.  
 From Him be greetings to the men of name  
 Above their own deserts. Remember naught  
 Of all that passeth in this world of ours  
 Save honest fame, accomplishment, and justice.  
 Amid my conquests grief hath come to me,  
 And mourning at a feast. I swear by Him,  
 V. 1806 The Lord of sun on high, that ne'er I purposed  
 Harm to Dára's life. They that wished him ill  
 Were of his household. and the act was not  
 A stranger's but a servant's who hath felt  
 God's chastisement and suffered for his crimes.  
 Now seek ye justice, do as I command,  
 And stake your lives upon your fealty  
 As ye would have success from heaven. would have  
 At my hands purses, captives, thrones, and crowns.  
 Mine ardent heart is woeful for Dára,  
 And I shall strive to do his last behests.  
 Whoe'er he be that cometh to my court  
 Shall have drachms, honours, thrones, and diadems :  
 But, if he will abide at his own house,  
 Let him not swerve from his fidelity.  
 Send ye my treasury its dues, and then  
 No one shall suffer either pain or travail.  
 Coin money with Sikandar's superscription.  
 Be diligent, and break not faith with him ;  
 Maintain henceforth your kings' seat as of old ;  
 Let not your marches be without a guard,  
 And in this matter let each show his worth :  
 Take care that there shall be in each bázár  
 A watch to call our name continually

That thieves may do no harm and ye abide  
 In all success and joy. Send to our bower,  
 To those devoted to us, from each city  
 A goodly handmaiden, a slave of sense  
 And modesty, fit for our golden chambers.  
 One knowing all the doctrines of our Faith.  
 And having no reluctance to be sent,  
 For wrong must not be done to any captive.  
 Those strangers who pass through our provinces  
 Afoot, in abstinence, heart-free from vice,  
 Content to live the life of mendicants,  
 And called Súfis,<sup>1</sup> distinguish from mere beggars.  
 And let them stand the foremost on the roll.  
 If any of you are unfortunates,  
 Afflicted by an officer of mine,  
 Break ye the unjust doer's heart and back,  
 And rase him utterly, both root and branch.  
 I will suspend alive that miscreant,  
 Who hath led fair beginnings all astray.  
 Enrich your hearts by alms and equity,  
 And make nobility your diadem,  
 Because your lives will pass and time account  
 Our every step. Whoever doth trangress  
 Our will shall suffer for it in the end."

V. 1807

The letter having been dispatched, he went  
 And took serene possession of the world.  
 He left Kirmán and coming to Istakhr  
 Encrowned him with the Kaians' glorious crown.

Seek not the secrets of the world to pry.  
 It turneth from the seeker's scrutiny:  
 Make knowledge in this life thy chief pursuit,  
 For in the next thou wilt enjoy the fruit.

<sup>1</sup> A sect of mystics.

## XX

### SIKANDAR

#### HE REIGNED FOURTEEN YEARS

##### ARGUMENT

Sikandar, on ascending the throne, harangues the nobles and marries Rūshanak, the daughter of Dārā. The poet then tells of Sikandar's dealing with Kaid and Fūr (Porus) of Hind, his visit to the Kaaba, to Queen Kaidifa (Candace), to the Brahmans, to the Western Sea, to the land of Habash and of the Narmpai, to the City of Women, to the Darkness in search of the Water of Life, and to the Angel Isráfil. Sikandar then again turns eastward, and erects a barrier against Yǎjǔj and Mǎjǔj (Gog and Magog), reaches the End of the World, and is warned of his own death by the Speaking Tree. The poet then tells of Sikandar's relations with Faghfūr of Chin, of his visit to Bābil, of his correspondence with Aristālís (Aristotle), and of the circumstances attending his death and burial.

##### NOTE

The Vullers-Landauer text, from which we have translated thus far, does not extend beyond the reign of Dārā, and from this point to the end we have made our version from the text of Macan. Mohl's edition of the text—the alternative—is, apart from other reasons for our choice, too ponderous for practical purposes; the volume of it containing the reign of Sikandar, for instance, measures  $18 \times 13 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$  inches and weighs 17 lbs. 2 ozs. ! The principles of our translation remain the same as laid down in the Introduction,<sup>1</sup> but it is necessary to add that in Macan's edition there are many misprints not included in the Errata at the end of his volumes. These misprints we have corrected in our translation, but have not thought it necessary to call attention to them

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 77.



in footnotes. The corrections for the most part are quite obvious, and sufficiently indicated in our version to any one acquainted with the original.

§§ 2-4. These correspond generally with the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Book II. chap. 22, and with the Syriac version, Book II. chap. 14. For Roxana, see p. 32.

§§ 5-11. Alexander on his arrival in India naturally came into contact with the Fakirs—the mendicant and ascetic orders which are such a feature of that country. His pilot, Onesicritus, has left an account of an embassy on which he was sent to them. He describes how he found fifteen men standing, sitting, or lying in various attitudes naked in the sun, and conversed with two of them, Calanus and Mandanes, of whom the latter was the older, the wiser, and the more generally amenable.<sup>1</sup> The former, however, accompanied Alexander back to Persia, where, having fallen into bad health, he was burnt to death by his own request.<sup>2</sup> Calanus is mentioned also by Alexander's admiral, Nearchus,<sup>3</sup> and by Chares of Mytilene.<sup>4</sup> According to Plutarch his real name was Sphînés, and Calanus was a name given him by the Greeks because in salutations he used the word *kale*, "hail."<sup>5</sup> The accounts in the original authorities of Calanus and Mandanes, or Dandamis—a name by which also he is known—were freely used by later writers.<sup>6</sup> Palladius, who was bishop of Helenopolis at the beginning of the fifth century A.D., wrote a treatise on the peoples of India and the Brahmans in which he gives an account of Calanus and Dandamis, drawn from the older authorities. This work was interpolated into Codex A of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, where it forms chaps. 7-16 of Book III, thus bringing Calanus into the Romance. Dandamis had appeared already in chap. 6. The passage from Palladius is given in the early Latin version of the Romance by Julius Valerius, but not in the Syriac translation from the Pahlavi. The first oriental mention of the Indian sages seems to be in the little Pahlavi treatise known as the *Kárnámak-i-Ardshîr-i-Pâpakân*, which will engage our attention later on in the present volume.<sup>7</sup> In that treatise, which dates back probably to the seventh century A.D., the founder of the Sâsânian dynasty consults the wise Indian, Kart. It is true that Ardshîr Pâpakân lived five centuries after Sikandar, but in the *Shâhnâma* this would be no bar to the reappearance of the sage. Ya'kûbi, the Arabic historian, writing towards the end of the ninth century

<sup>1</sup> MF, p. 50.    <sup>2</sup> DAA, vii. 3.    <sup>3</sup> MF, 60. 71.    <sup>4</sup> *Id.* 118.

<sup>5</sup> Life of Alexander, chap. 65. There is a San-krit word *kalyâna* which means "lucky." See MCI, p. 386.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* 392.

<sup>7</sup> See pp. 195, 256.

A.D., has an account of Sikandar's meeting with a wise Indian king named Kaihan. In Pahlaví the letter *t* well might be taken for the letters *h* and *n*, and these with the short vowel *a* interposed would make Kaihan.<sup>1</sup> The story of the Indian sage seems rapidly to have developed in oriental hands, as is evident from the account given by Mas'údí, who died in A.D. 956, of the dealings of Sikandar with the wise Indian king, Kand.<sup>2</sup> Mas'údí, indeed, professes to give an abridgment only; but his version, with one exception, agrees closely with that of Firdausí. The exception is the introductory matter contained in § 5, which appears to be the poet's own contribution to the story. Kaid's dreams are a veiled presentment of Firdausí's own discontent with the circumstances of his own time, and contain a fierce arraignment of Sultan Mahmúd himself.<sup>3</sup> Kait, Kaihan, Kand, and Kaid evidently represent the same personality, which is none other than that of the Mandanes or Dandamis of classic authors, while the sage whom he sends as one of his four gifts to Sikandar is the historical Calanus.<sup>4</sup> Firdausí adopted the form Kaid for rhyming purposes. Kaid, we are told in § 6, dwelt at Milád. Historically this would be Taxila, a city situated between the Indus and the Hydaspes (Jhilam) and Attock and Rawalpindi. Omphis, the king of Taxila, who was at enmity with his neighbour King Porus, was on very friendly terms with Alexander. Both Calanus and Mandanes or Dandamis were resident at Taxila. In the Sháhnáma Sikandar's dealings with Kaid are placed correctly before the war with Fúr. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes the interpolation from Palladius<sup>5</sup> is inserted after the account of Alexander's interview with the naked Indian sages in Book III. chaps. 5 and 6, a passage which is an integral part of the work and will be dealt with later on, for the interview is represented both in the Pseudo-Callisthenes and in the Sháhnáma as taking place after the war with Porus (Fúr).<sup>6</sup> In Mas'údí and Mirkhánd the affair with Kaid also takes place after that war.<sup>7</sup> Their account of Sikandar's passage of wits with the sage agrees closely with that of Firdausí in § 11, save that when Sikandar returns the rusted mirror to the sage the latter makes a cup that will float of it; on which Sikandar sends it back filled with earth, and the sage returns it to him without alteration, earth being the last word in all matters. Such symbolism is common in the East, and the whole passage might be interpreted thus. The Shah begins by suggesting that the sage had better get into training if his wits are to be of any use to his new master. The sage

<sup>1</sup> NAR, 47.<sup>2</sup> MM, ii. 260.<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vol. i. p. 33.<sup>4</sup> NAR, 47.<sup>5</sup> See p. 61.<sup>6</sup> See p. 67.<sup>7</sup> MM, ii. 260; RM. Part I. vol. ii. p. 253.

replies that they are already as sharp as needles. The Shāh retorts that, though they may be sharp they are unpolished, and the sage rejoins that on the contrary they are exceedingly bright. The Shāh then observes that he can soon take the shine out of them, and the sage retorts that he knows a trick worth two of that. At this point the Shāh, hoping to take the sage at a disadvantage, summons him and requests him to interpret what had passed between them, thinking that he may not like to put his symbolism into plain speech. The sage, however, is equal to the occasion, and on the spur of the moment gives an unexpected turn to his interpretation, and one which meets with the Shāh's approval. The true interpretation seems to be this. The Shāh by sending a bowl full of ghee indicates that already he is so charged with knowledge that he has no occasion for the sage's services. The sage, by inserting many needles into the ghee, suggests that there is room for improvement. The Shāh replies that his finer faculties have become too blunted by the cares of his station. The sage rejoins that he can amend that. The Shāh retorts that the improvement will not last, but this the sage denies. Mas'ūdī adds that ultimately Sikandar allowed the sage to return to his own country.<sup>1</sup>

A similar story is told by Hiuen Tsiang of two great Buddhist saints who lived about the first century B.C. One visited the other to hold discussion with him. The visitor was not admitted at once. The other sent a disciple to him with a begging bowl full of water, symbolising the fulness, depth, and lucidity of the wisdom of his master. The visitor said nothing but dropped a needle into the bowl. The disciple returned and reported what had happened to his master, who at once recognised the worth of the visitor and gave orders that he should be admitted.<sup>2</sup>

§§ 12-15. These correspond with Book III. chap. 1-4 of the Pseudo-Callisthenes and of the Syriac version of it, and like them are quite unhistorical, as will be seen from the following summary of what really happened. On quitting Taxila, Alexander marched to the Hydaspes (Jhilam), on the opposite bank of which he found Porus with his forces prepared to dispute the passage. He deceived Porus so often by feints that after a time the latter ceased to believe that Alexander's intention of crossing the river was serious: and Alexander, in a night of storm and rain, succeeded in effecting the passage—one of his most brilliant feats of arms. Immediately after the crossing he was attacked by the son of Porus with a small force, which he defeated without much difficulty, and the son of Porus was slain. The general engage-

<sup>1</sup> MM. ii. 276.

<sup>2</sup> BBR, ii. 210, 215 *note*.

ment with Porus himself followed. Alexander was again victorious, and Porus, who had behaved throughout with great gallantry and was wounded, surrendered after Alexander had sent several messengers to beg him so to do. Alexander treated Porus with every consideration, restored his kingdom to him, and enlarged it. The battle with Porus was fought in the late spring or early summer of B.C. 326. Alexander then continued his advance into India, crossed the Akesines (Chináb) and the Hydraotes (Ravi), and reached the Hyphasis (Beas). At this point his army refused to proceed further, and he acceded to their wishes, though with the greatest reluctance. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes such historical features as survive are adapted so as to contribute to the glory of its hero. Thus the protest of the army takes place before the battle with Porus and proves ineffective, because it was incumbent that Alexander should meet with no check. The difficulty of transporting horses across a river on the further bank of which a strong force of elephants was drawn up to oppose them, and the known antipathy of horses to elephants, suggested the device of the iron steeds. A tradition, resting on good authority, that Porus was very tall, "more than five cubits in height" according to Arrian,<sup>1</sup> suggested that Alexander should be made out to be very small. The death of the son of Porus may have suggested, or been mistaken for, that of his father, which naturally is represented as having been caused by Alexander's own hand.

The differences between the Pseudo-Callisthenes and Firdausí are not important and chiefly in matters of detail. In the former Porus begins the correspondence; he has wild beasts as well as elephants in his army. In branches B and C Alexander, disguised as a sutler, visits the city of Porus and has an interview with him. In the battle that ensues Bucephalus falls, in branch A by the hand of Porus. The battle lasts for twenty days, and so forth. In the latter the kingdom of Fúr is situated beyond Kannúj—a city on the Ganges—and it is there that the correspondence with Fúr takes place. After the correspondence comes the protest of the army against proceeding further. Sikandar appoints Sawurg king in Fúr's stead.

§ 16. This is derived, of course, not from the Pseudo-Callisthenes, but from independent Arabic sources. It appears in Dinawari, who died in A.D. 896.<sup>2</sup> The insertion makes wild work of the geography, for it brings Sikandar back from Kannúj, according to Firdausí, to Mecca. Later on, he has to go eastward again in order to interview the Brahmans.

The neighbourhood of Mecca has been a sacred spot from time

<sup>1</sup> DAA, v. 19.

<sup>2</sup> NAR. 39.

<sup>3</sup> § 24.

inmemorial. The city stands in a sacred territory known as "Harâm," i.e. "prohibited," and contains the still more sacred Kaaba, into the wall of which, and perhaps most sacred of all, is built the meteorite known as the "Black Stone." The Kaaba itself, according to the Kurân, was built by Abraham and Ishmael.<sup>1</sup> The custody of the Harâm—a position of great honour and profit—was in the hands now of one, now of another, of the Arab tribes. In Muhammad's time the Kuraish, whose ancestor was Nasr, son of Katib, were in charge. Previously it had been in that of the Khuzâ'. The fact that the change of guardianship is attributed to Sikandar is an eloquent testimony to his fame.<sup>2</sup> Kahtan, according to Arab tradition, was descended from Shem, and was one of the great progenitors of the race. He was identified with Joktan.<sup>3</sup>

§§ 17-23. We learn from Quintus Curtius that when Alexander was besieging Mazaga, a city situated probably on the Swat River, and the inhabitants despaired of the defence, their queen Cleophis, attended by many noble ladies, came out to him, was received graciously, and confirmed in her sovereignty. Some people, however, were ill-natured enough to say that her personal charms rather than Alexander's humanity brought about this result. At all events she is said to have had a son later on whom she named Alexander.<sup>4</sup> Alexander's relations with Cleophis and his visit to the Oasis of Ammon may have suggested to the author of the Pseudo-Callisthenes the episode which is the subject of the above sections. The story is, of course, unhistorical; but it is easy to see how it would suggest itself to an Egyptian, whether native or naturalised. Both before and after the Christian era Candace seems to have been the dynastic name of the queens, whether sole regnant, consort, or dowager, of that part of Nubia which is bounded by the Nile, the Blue Nile, and the Atbara, and known as the Island or as Meroë, the latter being also the name of one of its two principal cities, the other being Napata. Excavations have brought to light remains of tombs and palace, and reliefs of various queens of a pronounced negroid type. Whether Alexander was introduced into some already existing story, told originally in another connexion, of one of the old queens of Meroë, or whether the whole thing is the invention of the Egyptian author of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, it is impossible to say. Firdausi's version of the story corresponds with the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. III. chaps. 18-24, and with the Syriac version of it, Bk. III. chaps. 8-14. The three are closely in accord in most points.

<sup>1</sup> RK, p. 446.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. x. 25; 1 Chron. i. 19-20

<sup>2</sup> NAR, 30, and *notis.*

<sup>4</sup> HQC. Bk. viii. c. 10.

but there are differences in matters of detail and in the names of the characters in the story. The Kandake (Candace) of the Pseudo-Callisthenes and of the Syriac version becomes Kaidáfa in Firdausi, which shows that his account came to him through the Arabic, in which the name, in the absence of diacritical points, could be read either way. Similarly the Kandaules of the Greek, the Kandários of the Syriac,<sup>1</sup> became Kaidrúsh, the story having passed from Greek into Pahlaví, from Pahlaví into Syriac, from Syriac into Arabic, and from Arabic into Persian again (modern instead of middle) before Firdausi dealt with it. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes and the Syriac version Ptolemy takes Alexander's place when Kaidrúsh is brought into court, and Alexander assumes the name of Antigonos. In Firdausi the latter becomes the name of Sikandar's chief minister (Naikún), and the two exchange their respective positions. In the Greek and the Syriac the wife of Kandaules is taken prisoner by a hostile king, while Kandaules himself escapes to the camp of Alexander, who regains his wife for him. In Firdausi the pair are taken prisoners by Sikandar while celebrating their wedding-feast in the city of king Faryán, the father of the bride. This version is more considerate of the lady, who does not get off so easily in the Greek and Syriac. In the Greek too the scene of the action is laid in the kingdom of Semiramis, whose descendant<sup>2</sup> Kaidáfa is stated to be. In the Syriac the name Semiramis is corrupted into that of a people. In the Sháhnáma the scene is laid in Andalus, *i.e.* in Spain, which was conquered by the Arabs early in the eighth century A.D. In the Greek, Candace's other son, who had married a daughter of Porus, is unnamed, but is called Charogos in the early Latin version of Julius Valerius. In the Syriac he appears as Kerátór, and in the Sháhnáma as Tainúsh, who is represented there as being the eldest son, as in the Ethiopic, where he is called Kanír.<sup>3</sup> The Ethiopic too alone coincides with the Sháhnáma in giving the dramatic conclusion of the story—the discovery by Tainúsh (Kanír) that the ambassador to his mother was Alexander himself—from which we might conclude that both versions derived the incident from a common Arabic source. Another view, however, may be suggested. The hand of a poet is visible in Firdausi's presentment of the whole story. He enlists our sympathy by making Kaidrúsh and his wife a newly married couple, which is found in no other version, suppresses the worst of the lady's misfortunes, which is

<sup>1</sup> The *l* being read as *r*. Cf. p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Proneptis in the version of Julius Valerius, from which the Greek is restored. MPC. p. 126.

<sup>3</sup> BLEA, p. 206.

expressed or implied in the other versions, and makes two other consequential alterations. Taimūsh is described as being the elder instead of the younger son, because Firdausi represents him as having been longer married; and Faryūn, who stands for the abductor of the lady in the other versions, becomes her own father. Further, the Ethiopic version appears to have been a late production which came into being some time between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries,<sup>1</sup> when the *Shāhnāma* itself had become a great authority, and it seems not unlikely that the dramatic conclusion in the Ethiopic version was derived through the Arabic from Firdausi's own handiwork.

§ 24. This corresponds with Bk. III., chaps. 5-6, of the Pseudo-Callisthenes and of the Syriac version, in both of which the order of events is the war with Porus, the interview with the Brahmans, the affair with Candace. In Firdausi the order of the last two is transposed. This is due to the interpolation from Arabic sources of Sikandar's expedition to the Kaaba, in § 16, immediately after the war with Fūr. Consequently he has to make a second expedition eastward. His interview with the Brahmans may be regarded as a literary invention based partly on the account of Onesicritus<sup>2</sup> and partly on some other source, which is responsible for his questions and their answers. These appear in Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*, ch. 64. That historian makes the interview take place in the course of Alexander's voyage down the Indus to the sea. The questions and answers vary in the different accounts. The question as to whether the living or the dead are the most numerous is found in Plutarch, where the answer is, the living, in the Pseudo-Callisthenes, in Julius Valerius, and in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions.

The question whether there is most land or water occurs in the Pseudo-Callisthenes and Julius Valerius. In the Syriac version the question is as to whether the land or the water is the older. In Plutarch the question is whether the earth or sea produces the largest beast. In both cases the answer is, the earth.

The question as to who are the sinners, or the most sinful, is found in the Pseudo-Callisthenes, in Julius Valerius where it occurs in the form, which is the most cunning of beasts? in the Syriac and in the Ethiopic.

Alexander's question as to what the Brahmans would have of him is found in the Pseudo-Callisthenes, in Julius Valerius, and in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions.

Several of the questions occurring in other versions do not appear in the *Shāhnāma*, such, for instance, as those in the Syriac

<sup>1</sup> BHA, p. lxxxix.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 61; and cf. NAR, p. 6.

as to whether death or life is the mightier; which existed first, day or night; and whether the limbs on the left side of the body or on the right side are the better, and so forth.

§§ 25-27. At this point the adventures of Sikandar become more romantic. In codex A of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, and in the Latin version of Julius Valerius, they form the subject of a letter, purporting to be written by Alexander to Aristotle, and come between the visit to the Brahmans and that to Candace. The letter is a long one, and is lengthier still in the Syriac version, which contains incidents no longer extant in the Greek but found in the Sháhnáma. In the Greek the letter forms ch. 17 and in the Syriac ch. 7 of Bk. III.

It may be well to quote here a short passage from McCrindle's *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, which is very apposite in the present connexion. Speaking of the ancient Greeks' conception of India, he says:—"They imagined it to be an Eastern Ethiopia which stretched away to the uttermost verge of the world, and which, like the Ethiopia of the West, was inhabited by a race of men whose visages were scorched black by the fierce rays of the sun. See Homer, *Od.* i. 23-24, where we read

*Αἰθίοπες, τοὶ διχθὰ δαδαίραται, ἔσχατοι ἀνδρῶν,  
Οἱ μὲν δυσμένον Ἰππεύονος οἱ δ' ἀνίοντος.*

(The Ethiopians, who are divided into two, and live at the world's end—one part of them towards the setting sun, the other towards the rising.) Herodotus in several passages mentions the Eastern Ethiopians, but distinguishes them from the Indians (see particularly Bk. vii. 70). Ktésias, however, who wrote somewhat later than Herodotus, frequently calls the Indians by the name of Ethiopians, and the final discrimination between the two races was not made till the Makedonian invasion gave the Western world more correct views of India. Alexander himself, as we learn from Strabo, on first reaching the Indus mistook it for the Nile. Much lies in a name, and the error made by the Greeks in thus calling India Ethiopia led them into the further error of considering as pertinent to both these countries narrations, whether of fact or fiction, which concerned but one of them exclusively. This explains why we find in Greek literature mention of peculiar or fabulous races, both of men and other animals, which existed apparently in duplicate, being represented sometimes as located in India, and sometimes in Ethiopia or the countries thereto adjacent."<sup>1</sup> Bearing this passage in mind, it is easy to understand that the original author of the Romance of

<sup>1</sup> MCAI, p. 3 and note.



Alexander, whose idea was to make his hero traverse the whole world, and the later redactors of the Romance, found it easy to provide a crop of marvels, of which the Persian version in the *Shāhnāma* furnishes a by no means exhaustive account. The Macedonian invasion may have given the Western world more correct ideas of India, but it did not prevent the Pseudo-Callisthenes from coming into being some five centuries later and flourishing exceedingly. The return of Alexander from India to Persia by sea and land along the desolate shores of Makran (Gedrosia) naturally gave rise to a crop of marvels not all without foundation.

§ 25. The people encountered by Sikandar after leaving the Brahmans were known to Arrian as the Oritæ. They dwelt in the neighbourhood of the Pur-Ali River. He describes them as wearing a dress and using arms similar to those of the Indians, but as differing in language and customs.<sup>1</sup> The shore-dwelling Oritæ are responsible for one of the etymologies suggested for the name of their country—Makrân—i.e. “Mahi-khūrân,” “Fish-eaters,” “Ichthyophagi,” which, even if it be not correct, is at least appropriate. Two extracts from Arrian’s *Indica*, based on the account of Nearchus, Alexander’s admiral, and others from modern sources, will serve to show that the habits of the shore-dwellers in that region have not altered materially during a period of over two thousand years, if we except the employment of the skeletons of whales for house-building—a custom that would be mentioned by modern travellers in those parts if it still obtained. The dwellings now consist of mats held together by poles or else take the form of mud huts.<sup>2</sup> “The Ichthyophagi live on fish, whence their name. Few of them indeed fish, few indeed have boats for the purpose, or know the art of fishing, but catch most at the ebb of the tide. Some even have made nets to do this, most of such a size that they stretch two stades.<sup>3</sup> These they make of palm-bass, which they twist like flax. When indeed the sea recedes, deserts the land, and leaves it dry, it is generally void of fish, but when the land retains the water in some deeper indentation, then they find a great abundance. Of these most are small, others large. These they encircle with their nets and take. The finer sorts they eat raw as they draw them from the water; the larger and coarser they dry in the sun, and, as soon as they are baked through, reduce them to flour by grinding and convert them into

<sup>1</sup> DAI. c. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Diary of Proceedings of the Mission into Makran*. By Major F. J. Goldsmid, in JRGS, Vol. xxxiii. pp. 189, 198, 200, 203.

<sup>3</sup> Rather over 400 yards.

bread. Some make it into a paste. They even give their beasts fish-flour instead of fodder. All the region, in the absence of meadows, produces no herbage. They take withal in these parts a great quantity of crabs, oysters, and shell-fish. The region also naturally produces salt, from which they make (an equivalent or substitute for?) oil. Those of them indeed that inhabit the desert parts, and a region productive of neither trees nor fruit, live on fish only: a few sow a little ground, and eat bread as a relish with their fish, for fish are their corn. They build their houses thus. The wealthiest of them take whatever bones of the whale the sea throws up, and use them in the place of timber, making the largest into doors. The indigent majority make their houses of fish bones."<sup>1</sup> In the following chapter Arrian enters more into detail:—"Some of the whales are driven ashore occasionally in various places, and are stranded when the tide recedes; others are cast on to the land by violent storms, and perish of putrefaction; their flesh dropping off leaves their bones for men to employ in house-building. Their greater ribs are selected for the beams, the smaller for the planks; the jaw-bones are taken for doors."<sup>2</sup>

A modern account says:—"Nearchus . . . names the whole of this coast, from the river Indus to Charbar, the country of the Ichthyophagi or fish-eaters, and the inhabitants still live entirely on fish, the cattle having much the same diet as their masters, for the country is wholly destitute and barren, and yields no sort of grass. Vast stores of oysters, crabs, and all kind of shell-fish are found on the coast, of which Nearchus's description is generally very accurate. In many places, both here and in Arabia, the cattle are fed entirely on dried fish and dates mixed together, on account of the great scarcity of grass in these sun-burnt and sandy regions."<sup>3</sup>

A later account says:—"Fish, to this day, is the staple article of food for those of the inhabitants living on the sea-board, and in this respect they fully bear out the name of *ichthyophagi* given to their ancestors by ancient writers."<sup>4</sup> And again:—"Nearchus . . . coasted along the shores of Balochistan, and his account of the natives he met with, and the difficulty he found in obtaining supplies, is as credible as if the voyage had been carried on under similar circumstances at the present day."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> DAI, c. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Notes made on a Survey along the Eastern Shores of the Persian Gulf* in 1828. Communicated by Lieutenant G. B. Kemphorne. In JRGs, Vol. v. p. 270, original series.

<sup>4</sup> HB, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* 178.

There is further mention of the Ichthyophagi in § 34.

The story of Sikandar's adventure with a basking whale which was mistaken for an island, with disastrous consequences to those that visited it, has not been lost sight of by the romancers and poets of later ages. In the first voyage of Sindbad the sailor, in the *Arabian Nights*, he lands upon an island "like a garth of the gardens of Paradise," but which proves to be a great fish, and sinks when fires are lighted on it for cooking purposes.<sup>1</sup> For the poets the reader may be referred to the passage in *Paradise Lost*, Bk. i. line 200 *seq.*, Aldine ed.<sup>2</sup>

The reeds mentioned are of course bamboos, of which one of the many uses is for house-building.

§ 26. Here we are introduced to the true Ethiops, who, according to Greek notions, occupied the extremities of the world both in the East and West.<sup>3</sup>

§ 27. The above remark applies equally to the Narmpoi.<sup>4</sup> The story of the dragon is not extant in the Pseudo-Callisthenes or in the Latin version of Julius Valerius. It is found, however, in the Syriac version and in the Ethiopic,<sup>5</sup> which represent the monster as being regarded as a god by the natives. In the Syriac it is described as killing its victims by drawing in its breath, and so sucking them down its throat.<sup>6</sup>

The temple that Sikandar visits is that of Dionysus, and the corresponding passage in the Pseudo-Callisthenes is Bk. III. ch. 28. There is a doublet of the visit in § 31.

§ 28. Modern historical research, which is restoring to us the knowledge of the great Hittite empire once dominant in Asia Minor and northern Syria, appears incidentally to have thrown light on the origin of the legend of the Amazons. The period of the historical importance of the Hittites dates approximately from B.C. 2000 to B.C. 700: and it appears that their great goddess Ma—the prototype of Cybele, the Great Mother—was served by women "who in later centuries, on the decline of the Hittite power, at the coming maybe of the Phrygians, at first for the defence of their religion, and later separating in independent action, developed into armed priestesses."<sup>7</sup> In the Introductory Note to the work here quoted Professor Sayce says:—"The Amazons of Greek legend prove to have been the warrior-priestesses of the

<sup>1</sup> BAN, vi. 5.    <sup>2</sup> See too *id.* notes, and LAN, iii. 83.    <sup>3</sup> See p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> They are referred to in Pliny's *Nat. Hist.*, Bk. v., sect. 46, as "Himantopodes loripedes quidam quibus serpendo ingredi natura sit." Cf. Vol. ii. p. 55, and note.

<sup>5</sup> BHA, p. 107; BLEA, p. 106.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Vol. v. p. 233, note.

<sup>7</sup> GH, pp. 170, 357.

great Hittite goddess."<sup>1</sup> The seat of the Amazons, which legend places on the river Thermodon, is quite in concord with the above identification, and their legend itself extends from Homer<sup>2</sup> through Herodotus and many other writers to Sir John Maundeville.<sup>3</sup> As to the origin of the legend that brought Alexander into connexion with the Amazons we are told by Arrian that when that king was in Sughdiana he received a visit from Pharasmanes, king of the Kharazmians, who stated that his dominions marched with those of the Colchians and Amazons, and that if Alexander desired to proceed to those regions and subjugate the races in the neighbourhood of the Euxine he would act himself as guide and furnish necessities for the troops.<sup>4</sup> The land of Kharazm is now represented by the modern Khiva, and the whole breadth of the Caspian Sea intervened between Pharasmanes and his nearest neighbours to the west; but the mere suggestion seems to have taken root, and soon it was affirmed by some of the more romantic, or less scrupulous, historians of Alexander that the queen of the Amazons had visited him in person—the view adopted by Quintus Curtius, who tells us how their queen Thalestris arrived with her suite of three hundred women from the vicinity of the river Thermodon, and spent about a fortnight with the king.<sup>5</sup> In the Pseudo-Callisthenes it is Alexander who visits the Amazons, and the visit takes place immediately after that to Candace, queen of Ethiopia, in which the ground is laid for it by representing her son and daughter-in-law as being on their way to perform religious rites in the land of the Amazons when the lady was abducted. Firdausi, who omits the passage about the abduction, naturally leaves out the reference to the Amazons and gives his account of them in another connexion.<sup>6</sup> His version corresponds with that of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. III. ch. 25-27, and with the Syriac version, Bk. III. ch. 15-17. In these versions and in the *Sháhnáma* the Amazons are represented as living on an island, and the account of their marriage-customs in the Pseudo-Callisthenes and in the poem may owe something to the stories of the Male and Female Islands that no doubt were current in Egypt in connexion with the country—southern Arabia—whence it obtained its supplies of frankincense. It seems to have been the custom of the incense-gatherers, who were always men, to leave their wives and children at home, which in this case would mean, among other localities, the Kuria Muria Islands, while they themselves crossed over to the mainland for the purposes of their trade. Sons, when grown up, would

<sup>1</sup> G.H. p. ix.<sup>2</sup> *Iliad*, iii. 187 *seq.*; vi. 186.<sup>3</sup> AM, cap. L.<sup>4</sup> DAA. iv. 15.<sup>5</sup> HQC, vi. 5.<sup>6</sup> See p. 153.

accompany their fathers, while the daughters would remain with the mothers. The seven Kuria Muria Islands thus became known collectively as "The Female Island," while the mainland represented "The Male Island."<sup>1</sup> There appears to be a reference to the same custom in Hiuen Tsiang:—"To the south-west of Fo-lin, in an island of the sea, is the kingdom of the western women: here there are only women, with no men: they possess a large quantity of gems and precious stones, which they exchange in Fo-lin. Therefore the king of Fo-lin sends certain men to live with them for a time. If they should have male children, they are not allowed to bring them up."<sup>2</sup>

By the black race encountered by Sikandar on his way to the city of the Amazons the negroes seem to be intended, and the description is quite in the style of one in the *Arabian Nights*:—"Then sprang with a drop-leap from one of the trees a big slobbering blackamoor with rolling eyes which showed the whites, a truly hideous sight."<sup>3</sup> The bringing of frost and snow would be a great marvel in their hot country. Similarly Sarv, king of Yaman, tries to overcome the three sons of Faridun.<sup>4</sup>

It does not seem possible to identify the fair-haired race that Sikandar met after leaving Harum. The type is too common and his wanderings are too vague. There is the Berber race in North Africa among which the blond type with blue eyes is not uncommon, and in northern Europe the Scandinavian. Herodotus too speaks of the Budini, whom he places north of the Palus Maeotis, as having blue eyes and red hair:<sup>5</sup> and Tacitus describes in similar terms the peoples of Germany.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, tribes with red beards and blue eyes are mentioned in Chinese annals as living in Central Asia.<sup>7</sup>

The notion of "The Gloom," about which Sikandar makes inquiries, seems to have been the outcome of two distinct conceptions. One was that as the sun set in the West, and thereupon night ensued, there was a Land of Darkness in that quarter. This notion is as old as Homer, who opposes the East to the West by describing the former as being πρὸς Ἠῶ τ' Ἠελίον τε, "towards the dawn and the sun," and the latter as being πρὸς ζόφον, "towards the gloom."<sup>8</sup> The other was based on the accounts that filtered through to the sunnier South of the dark-

<sup>1</sup> SP, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> BBR, ii. 279. Fo-lin is supposed to stand for the Byzantine empire. *Id.* p. 278. *note.* Cf. too YMP, Bk. iii c xxvi., and *note.*

<sup>3</sup> BAN, i. 6.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. i, p. 184.

<sup>5</sup> Bk. iv. c. 108.

<sup>6</sup> *Germania*, c. 4.

<sup>7</sup> BAG, i. 193, and *note.*

<sup>8</sup> *Iliad*, xii. 239-240; *Odyssey*, xiii. 240. &c.

ness of the North—the long sunless winters of the Arctic Circle. Attached to each conception was the idea of an earthly paradise—in the West the garden of the Hesperides, and in the North the elysium of the Hyperboreans, who had their counterpart, or original, in Indian legend which told that “towards the North, beyond the Himalaya, dwelt the Uttarakuri, a people who enjoyed a long and happy life, to whom disease and care were unknown, and who revelled in every delight in a land all paradise.”<sup>1</sup> Hesiod knew of the Hyperboreans.<sup>2</sup> There is an interesting chapter on “The Land of Darkness” in Marco Polo.<sup>3</sup>

§ 29. At the close of § 28 we have the beginning of the story of Sikandar's famous expedition into the Land of Darkness and to the Fount of Life. This does not appear in branch A of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, in the early Latin version of Julius Valerius, or in the Syriac version. It is given at large, however, in branch C, which has Christian leanings, and it is found also in the Ethiopic version. It is obvious that Firdausi's account had passed through the Arabic. The Arabic in its turn came from the Syriac, and the existence of the account in the Syriac is due to the fact that Jacob of Sarig<sup>4</sup> inserted it in his metrical version of the Syriac Christian Legend of Alexander already referred to.<sup>5</sup> The basis of the whole is branch C of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, where the account runs as follows:—“Thence Alexander set forth again with his host, retiring to a level place in the midst whereof was a ravine. Having thrown a bridge across he wrote thereon in Greek, Persian, and Egyptian, and the writings signified: ‘Alexander, arriving hither, built this arch, and crossed it with his whole host, being desirous of possessing the ends of the earth, God willing.’ And in three days he came to regions where the sun did not shine. The name thereof is ‘The Country of the Blest.’ And Alexander, having left the baggage and the infantry with the old men and the women, was minded to take chosen youths with him to investigate and see these regions. His friend Callisthenes advised him to make his entry with forty friends, one hundred youths, and twelve hundred soldiers. King Alexander set forth, instructing them to take no old man with them. An inquisitive elder, however, who had two sons—noble and trusty soldiers—said to them: ‘Children, hearken to your father and take me with you, and I shall be found not empty on the journey, for I wot that in time of difficulty the old will be sought after, and you therefore, as having me with you, will be honoured much

<sup>1</sup> MCAI, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, iv. 32.

<sup>3</sup> YMP. Vol. ii. p. 483 *seq.* and *notes.*

<sup>4</sup> See p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

by your king. Lest, being found to transgress his ordinance, ye be deprived of life, now, bestirring yourselves, crop my head and beard; thus altering hair and appearance I will go with you and prove of great use to you in the time of need.' So doing their father's bidding, they took the old man with them. Thus they fared with Alexander and reached a murky spot. Being unable to advance further, owing to the impassable nature of the place, they removed thence their tents. Next day, Alexander, taking with him a thousand soldiers, went to ascertain if the end of the earth were there. Going leftward he saw a part that was lighter, and fared over places waste and precipitous for half the day. This he knew not from the sun but by taking measurement of the way geometrically. Afterwards he turned back in alarm because the route was impracticable. Emerging, he was minded to go to the right because the plain was level, albeit dark and gloomy. But being in difficulties because none of the youths were willing for him to enter that dark place in that, the horses being wearied out by the glooms of that dark road, they would be unable to return, Alexander said to them:—'O noble soldiers! ye all know now that in wars nothing is done nobly without counsel and advice, for in good sooth an old man coming with us would direct us how we ought to enter this dark region. If now there be some noble man among you let him go and bring into our camp for me an elder, and he shall have much gold of me.' Howbeit none of them was found to do this thing by reason of the length of the way and of the lightless air. Then, presenting themselves, the sons of the old man said to Alexander:—'If thou wilt hear us with forbearance, O king! we will tell thee somewhat.' King Alexander said:—'Say what ye will, for I swear by divine Providence not to wrong you.' Forthwith they told him about their sire, and ran and brought the old man to him. Alexander, on seeing, embraced him and asked him to counsel them. The old man said: 'It is fit, O king Alexander! for you to know this, that if horses enter you will see the light never more. Choose therefore mares with foals, and leave the foals there, going yourselves with the mares; they will lead us thither.'<sup>1</sup> Alexander therefore made search among all those with him, but only found a hundred mares with foals. Taking these and another hundred selected ones, as well as many others to carry their provand, he entered according to the counsel of the old man, leaving the foals without. The old man instructed his sons that whatever they should find lying on the ground as they went they were to collect and place in their pouches. There entered with Alexander three

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<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* back to the foals.

hundred and sixty soldiers, and thus advancing along the dark road for fifteen *schani*,<sup>1</sup> they saw a certain place wherein was a bright fountain whereof the water flashed like lightning; the air was fragrant and most sweet. Now Alexander, the king, becoming hungry, wished to eat bread, and calling his cook, who was named Andreas, told him to prepare a meal. Taking a dried fish he went to the shining water of the fountain to wash the meat. On being wetted in the water it came to life forthwith and escaped from the hand of the cook, who told nobody of what had happened, but took himself some of the same water in a silver vessel and safe-guarded it: the whole place indeed gushed with waters whereof all drank and partook of food. Alexander, after he had eaten, again journeyed on for thirty *schani*, and further saw a light without sun, moon, or stars, and he beheld three birds flying, but having the aspect of men, and crying to him from aloft in the Grecian tongue: 'The land whereon thou treadest, Alexander! is that of God alone. Return, thou wretch! thou art not able to tread the Country of the Blest. Go back then, O man! and tread the earth bestowed upon thee, and prepare not troubles for thyself.' Being affrighted, Alexander gave instant heed to the words spoken to him by the birds, one of which cried to him again:—'The East calleth thee, Alexander! and the realm of Porus shall become subject to thee by conquest.' Thus saying the bird flew off. Alexander, having resigned himself to Providence, bade Antiochus to signify to the troops:—'Let each that wisheth take of what is here, be it stone or earth or wood.' To some it seemed good so to do, while to others Alexander's words appeared madness. Now as they went he said to Philon:—'Dismount and take up whatever chanceth.' Philon, dismounting, found a stone that seemed to him one of the worthless sort, and taking this he fared with Alexander. Many of the troops too took what each found from the material lying in that place, and the sons of the old man in particular, according to the bidding of their father, filled their wallets till they could walk no longer. Alexander, having guides, sent on the asses in front, marched by the Wain, and in some days arrived within hearing of the neighing of the mares, and in this manner issued from the land of night. So they came to the light where were the rest of the troops, and, looking on one another, found pearls and stones of price. When they saw this those that had taken none repented, while all those that had taken them blessed the old man and Alexander for their good counsel. Philon brought his stone to Alexander, and it was

<sup>1</sup> A measure of length varying from 60 to 30 stades. A stade = 606½ English feet.



all gold. Then the cook told how the meat had come to life. Alexander, enraged, ordered him a terrible scourging. He said however to Alexander:—‘What boots it, Alexander! to repent a past matter?’ He did not say that he had drunk of the water or that he had kept some of it. This the cook refrained from confessing save as to the dried fish coming to life. Then that wicked cook going to Kalé, the daughter of Alexander and of the concubine Uné, seduced her, promising to give her to drink of the Water of the Fount of Immortality, which he did. Alexander, hearing of this, envied their immortality. He called his daughter and said to her:—‘Take thy clothes and depart, for behold thou hast become a goddess, being immortal, and thou shalt be called Nereis as having immortality from water, and therein shalt thou dwell.’ Weeping and mourning she departed from him, and consorted in waste places with the spirits. As for the cook, Alexander gave orders for a stone to be fastened to his neck, and that he should be flung into the sea. Being cast away thus he became a god and dwelt in a part of the sea that on this account was called Andreanticus. So much for the cook and the daughter of Alexander, who took these things to signify that the end of the earth was in those parts. When they came to the arch that Alexander had built, he engraved thereon again to this effect:—‘Let those that wish to enter the Land of the Blest fare to the right.’”<sup>1</sup>

This legend through the Syriac became known to Muhammad, who gives his version of it in the chapter of the Kurán known as “The Cave.” Of part of the story he makes Moses the hero and of the rest Zû'l-karnain, i.e. The Two-horned (Alexander the Great). In the Kurán the part of the legend concerned with the salt fish is told in connexion with Moses and, being somewhat obscure and fragmentary, has given a fine opportunity to the commentators. To elucidate the passage in the Kurán it was explained that on one occasion when Moses had made an eloquent address to his followers they were so impressed that they asked him if he knew of any one wiser than himself, and he replied that he did not. The Almighty reproached him for his vanity and told him that if he would go to a certain rock, where two seas met, he would find his master in wisdom. He was to take with him a fish in a basket and, when he missed the fish, would know that he had reached the right place. Accordingly Moses and Joshua set forth, arrived at the rock, forgot all about the fish, and fared onward. At length Moses became hungry, bethought him of the fish, and told Joshua to bring it. Joshua had to admit

<sup>1</sup> MPC, Bk. ii. cc. 39-41.

stream<sup>2</sup>). And upon the bank of the river there was a tree, which grew and increased from dawn until the sixth hour, and from the sixth hour until evening it diminished in height until there was nothing to be seen of it. Its smell was very pleasant. . . .” In Zál’s riddle the sun only was taken into consideration. In Sikandar’s case the tree has a double trunk to provide for the moon as well. The male trunk (the sun) speaks by day, the female (the moon) by night. Much has been written about these trees, but the allegory seems fairly obvious.

§ 32. Sikandar’s expedition to Chin and his dealings with the Faghfúr are extant only in the Syriac version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, whence it passed into the Arabic as Dínawarí’s account, which follows the Syriac closely, shows.<sup>1</sup> Firdausí’s is closer still and agrees with the Syriac in making the Faghfúr, though conscious of his power, fall in with Sikandar’s wishes through sheer love of peace—a point omitted by Dínawarí.<sup>2</sup> This is the third occasion on which Alexander is represented as going as his own ambassador—a notion originating no doubt with the Egyptian author of the Pseudo-Callisthenes.

§ 33. According to Firdausí’s version, this is the third time that Sikandar goes to Hind. Historically, after the defeat of Porus, Alexander had some trouble with that king’s nephew, who, after having sent ambassadors to Alexander out of enmity towards his uncle, became disaffected when he found that Porus was held in such great honour by his conqueror.<sup>4</sup> Part of Alexander’s army, under Craterus, returned from India by way of Nímritz.

§ 34. This has some correspondence with the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. III. ch. 28, and with the Syriac version, Bk. III. ch. 18. In the former the priest of the sun is described as being an Ethiop, and seems to reappear in the Gúsh-bistár of the Sháhnáma. We have had Gúsh-bistárs already, in fact if not in name in Firdausí’s description of the races excluded by Sikandar’s barrier—

“ They sleep upon one ear,  
And use the other as a coverlet.”<sup>5</sup>

In this connexion the following passage is of interest: “The Enótokoítai are called in Sanscrit *Karnaprāvaramās*, and are frequently referred to in the great epic poems—*e.g.* *Mahābh.* II. 1170, 1875. The opinion was universally prevalent among the

<sup>1</sup> NAR, p. 40; BHA, p. 109 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* note.

<sup>3</sup> Or the fourth if we include his visit to the city of Porus, which is not mentioned in the Sháhnáma. See p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 64.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 163.

Indians that barbarous tribes had large ears. . . . "It is easy," says Wheeler (*Hist. Ind.*, Vol. iii. p. 179), "for any one conversant with India to point out the origin of many of the so-called fables. . . . Men do not have ears hanging down to their feet, but both men and women will occasionally elongate their ears after a very extraordinary fashion by thrusting articles through the lobe. . . . If there was one story more than another which excited the wrath of Strabo, it was that of a people whose ears hung down to their feet. Yet the story is still current in Hindustan. Bābū Johari Das says:—'An old woman once told me that her husband, a sepoy in the British army, had seen a people who slept on one ear, and covered themselves with the other.' (*Domestic Manners and Customs of the Hindus*, Banaras, 1860.) The story may be referred to the Himalayas. Fitch, who travelled in India about 1585, says that a people in Bhutan had ears a span long."<sup>1</sup>

For the Ichthyophagi see p. 69 ~q

§ 35. The correspondence with Aristotle with regard to the succession is of course an Oriental addition which came to Firdausi through the Arabic. Dinawari has it to the same effect, the chief difference being that he makes the matter the subject of an interview between Alexander and Aristotle at Jerusalem where, according to him, the former died.<sup>2</sup> The device was intended to account for the long interval—five centuries and a half—that separated the last of the Kakinians (Sikandar) from the first of the Sāsānians (Ardshir Pāpakān). The Persians made it out to be much shorter.<sup>3</sup>

The prodigious birth that occurred on Sikandar's arrival at Babylon is described in the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. III. ch. 30. in the Latin Version of Julius Valerius, and in the Syriac, Bk. III. ch. 19.

§ 36. The version of Alexander's will in the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. III. ch. 33, is longest in codex A, which unfortunately is much mutilated. The corresponding passage in the Syriac version is Bk. III. ch. 22, and this agrees with Firdausi's in the following points—the request to his mother not to grieve, the instruction to the chiefs to honour her, the gift of the kingdom of Macedonia (of Rum in Firdausi) to the son of Rūshanak, if she shall have one, and the direction that his (Sikandar's) body shall be laid in a golden coffin filled with honey, and conveyed for interment to Egypt. Most of the provisions of the will as given in the Greek and Syriac would have little or no interest for later

<sup>1</sup> MCAI. p. 75. note : cf. AM. p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> NAR. 41.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 193

Persian or Arabic writers, or for Firdausí himself, and naturally are lacking in the Sháhnáma.

§ 37. This corresponds with the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. III. ch. 32, 34, and with the Syriac version, Bk. III. ch. 21, but the latter omits the dispute of the Greeks and Persians over the disposal of Alexander's body. According to the Greek version the oracle of the Babylonian Zeus was consulted, by whose direction the corpse was conveyed to Memphis whence, at the instigation of the high priest of that city, it was taken to Alexandria and there buried. According to Firdausí the oracle was consulted at a place called Khurm, a word which means "vapour" or "exhalation." Similar emanations are said to have existed at Delphi.

Alexander died at Babylon on June 13th B.C. 323. His death was no doubt a natural one, the result of a fever, but it gave rise to a legend, referred to by Arrian only to be rejected,<sup>1</sup> that poison was employed for the purpose by Antipater who, fearing that his position as regent in Macedonia had been undermined by the intrigues of Olympias, sent his son Cassander to bring about the death of his master. Cassander found a willing instrument in Iollas, Alexander's cup-bearer, who had injuries of his own to avenge, and the fatal draught was administered at a banquet. The Pseudo-Callisthenes repeats the story,<sup>2</sup> and it appears in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions,<sup>3</sup> but not in the Sháhnáma.

§ 38. The sentences of the sages over the corpse of Sikandar are not in the Pseudo-Callisthenes or in the Syriac version of it. They are an Oriental addition, and Mas'údí gives another version of them.<sup>4</sup>

§ 39. Alexander's burial at Alexandria of course is historical. His mother, according to Mas'údí, removed the corpse from its golden coffin, lest the cupidity of future kings should be aroused and the tomb desecrated. Mas'údí, who spent some of his last years in Egypt, and died about A.D. 956, states that a pedestal of white and other coloured marbles, and known as the tomb of Alexander, was to be seen at Alexandria in A.D. 943-944.<sup>5</sup> S. Chrysostom, however, says that the tomb was destroyed in his time (A.D. 345-407), and the annual observance at Alexandria of the day of Alexander's death abolished.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps there may have been some restoration of the tomb by the Arabs, to whom the personality of Alexander was of interest,<sup>7</sup> after their conquest of the city in the middle of the seventh century A.D.

<sup>1</sup> DAA, vii. 27.

<sup>2</sup> BHA, Bk. iii. c. 20; BLEA, p. 339.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* 259.

<sup>4</sup> MPC, p. xxvi.

<sup>5</sup> MPC, iii. 31.

<sup>6</sup> MM. ii. 251; NAR, p. 48.

<sup>7</sup> See p. 15.

Firdausi says that Sikandar built ten cities. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes the number is twelve or thirteen,<sup>1</sup> thirteen in the Syriac version,<sup>2</sup> and twelve in the Ethiopic.<sup>3</sup> One at least of them has not become a brake of thorns, and the Romance of Alexander, which there first took literary form, has done more to extend his fame and make his name a household word than all the sober histories of him ever written.

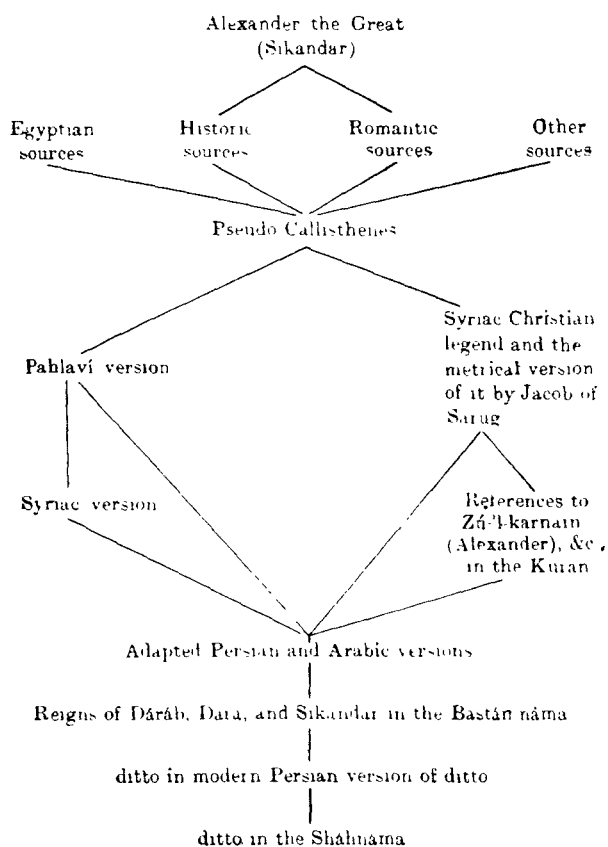
To conclude then, in the three reigns of Dārāb, Dārī, and Sikandar, taken collectively, we have the Persian version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes which, if it does not possess a complete historical skeleton, has at least a historical backbone, some of the vertebræ of which reappear in the *Shāhnāma*—*e.g.* Sikandar's invasion of Irān, the defeat and death of Darius, Sikandar's accession to the throne of Irān, his marriage with an Oriental princess, his invasion of India, his defeat of Porus and intercourse with Indian sages, his return to Irān, his death at Babylon, and interment at Alexandria. Of the elements introduced into the Pseudo-Callisthenes by its Egyptian author the Persian version reproduces two—the device of Sikandar going as his own ambassador, and the story of Kaidāfa. Of Persian and Arabic substitutions and additions, not appearing in versions of the Pseudo-Callisthenes other than the Persian, the most important are the account of the birth of Sikandar, his address to the chiefs on his accession to the Irānian throne, and his correspondence with Aristotle as to the succession. The purely Arabic are the story of Kaid, the pilgrimage to the Kaaba, the interview with the angel Isrāfil, and the sentences of the sages at Sikandar's interment.

The appended diagram may help to show the provenance of the Persian version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes.

<sup>1</sup> MPC, 151, *note*.

<sup>2</sup> BHA. Bk. iii. c. 24.

BLEA, p. 351.



## § 1

*How Sikandar sat upon the Throne of Írán*

When seated on the throne, Sikandar said :— C 1286  
 “Be wisdom wedded to the minds of kings.  
 For God is all-prevailing in the world.  
 And wicked is the world-lord that doth fear  
 Not Him. Our good and ill beyond all doubt  
 Will pass and not escape time’s clutch. Whoever  
 Shall come to this our court and shall appeal  
 For justice to ourselves against ourselves,  
 At audience-time or midnight, shall receive  
 An answer to his plaint, for in that God  
 Who giveth victory, hath granted us  
 The Grace and oped the door of conquering fortune.  
 My subjects all on mountain and on waste,  
 In city and at sea, shall share therein.  
 We do not ask for tribute from the world  
 For five years, saving from the man that saith :—  
 ‘Sikandar’s peer am I.’ We will bestow  
 Much wealth on mendicants, but ask not aught  
 From him that hath.”

At these his gracious words,  
 And at this union of his heart with justice  
 There went up a thanksgiving from Írán  
 To that just-dealing monarch of the earth,  
 And then the assembly scattered, but the king  
 Sat on with his advisers, counselling.

## § 2

*How Sikandar wrote to Dilárái and Rúshanak, the Wife and  
 Daughter of Dárú, touching the Nuptials of Rúshanak*

Sikandar ordered that a scribe should come.  
 And called for reed of Rúm and silk of Chín.

C. 1287

The scribe, when he had made the kex a pen  
 Indited this epistle to the mother  
 Of Rúshanak : " The guerdon of the good  
 God grant to thee and mind-peace after pain.  
 I wrote to thee erewhile with more advice  
 Than is contained herein. What time the days  
 Of him who was thy spouse had reached their close,  
 And he was murdered by a servant's hand.  
 I buried him with royal obsequies,  
 And have accomplished all the days of mourning.  
 Oft-times before the war I sued for peace.  
 But he refused because his time had come.  
 His very foemen sorrowed for his blood.  
 May God receive him into Paradise.  
 The Just One give him place among the Saints.  
 And to his foes the bane of arrow-points.  
 None maketh shift to scape death's clutch ; 'tis like  
 An autumn-blast, and we are as the leaves.  
 Now ye have all the world at your disposal.  
 Not few bear witness to Dára's last wish  
 How he gave Rúshanak to me, and said :—  
 ' Thou hast no equal to her in thy bower.'  
 So send her to me, and that presently,  
 Escorted by her guardians and her slaves,  
 And by the chiefs and nobles of Írán,  
 To bring the light upon my darkling soul.  
 Make Ispahán<sup>1</sup> thine own as in the past,  
 Send out intelligencers everywhere.  
 And keep in office those just, modest men  
 Appointed by Dára, son of Dáráb.  
 If ye would live not there choose where ye will,  
 The cities of Írán are all before you :  
 But be ye reconciled to me in heart,  
 And give me in the world the name Dára."  
 He wrote a letter too to Rúshanak,

<sup>1</sup> The text has the Arabic form Isfahán.



And made the pen's point eloquent. He first  
 Gave praise to God, the Ruler of the world,  
 The Wise, the All-sustainer : then he said :—  
 " The stock of kings begetteth but men pious.  
 Attractive, well-advised, refined, and modest,  
 Men eloquent of speech and soft of voice.  
 Thy father gave thee to me : then he died.  
 And bare away with him a goodly name.  
 When thou arrivest hither, and beholdest  
 My bower and palace, thou shalt be my queen  
 Chief consort, the adornment of my throne  
 The lustre of my Grace, my name, and fortune.  
 A letter have we written to thy mother  
 To bid her send thee hither in a fashion  
 Befitting issue of the king of kings.  
 And with an archimage of Ispahan  
 Preceding thee, with servants of the crown.  
 With elephants and litters, and with her  
 Who gave thee milk and honey. Dwell within  
 Our house with joy—chief lady of the bower.  
 Now be high heaven circling to thy will,  
 Thy person far from foe and far from harm."  
 Came, swift as flying dust-cloud, one well versed  
 In wisdom, and the world's king's words rehearsed.

## § 3

*How Dilárái answered the Letter of Sikandar*

When Dilárái heard this she heaved a sigh,  
 And weeping for Dárá in tears of blood.  
 So that the dust beneath was saturate,  
 Called for a scribe and wrote a fair response  
 In well instructed terms and well inspired.  
 She first gave praises to the Omnipotent.  
 The Lord of counsel, peace, and excellence.

C. 1283

Then : " From the process of revolving heaven  
 Whence are strife, peace, and love, we used to ask  
 All Grace upon Dárá's behalf and made  
 His name the jewel of our tongues ; but since  
 His day is over, and he is enthroned  
 Upon a coffin-board, it is for thee,  
 And thee alone, that I ask blessings. might,  
 With triumph, kingship, and the world's obedience :  
 I ask it openly without reserve.  
 For I have heard (may heaven joy in thy soul :)  
 What courteously thou hast conveyed to me  
 About the obsequies of Sháh Dárá,  
 How Máhiyár was gibbeted and how  
 Malevolent Jánúsiyár was punished.  
 Brief is his life that murdereth his master.  
 Thou hast sought peace, too, and passed many a day  
 In counsel. Service is not for the Sháhs,  
 And none expecteth thralldom in the great.  
 Thou'rt in Dárá's place, who was king of kings,  
 And as the Sun hath set thou art our Moon.  
 Since he that was the monarch of the age  
 Chose thee not one will dare transgress his rede.  
 Next as to what he said of Rúshanak,  
 That wish of his which made our heart rejoice :  
 She is thine handmaid, and we are thy slaves ;  
 We bow our heads to thy command and will.  
 She sendeth greetings and hath writ to thee  
 A letter like the garth of Paradise.  
 We have, moreover, written to the magnates,  
 The frontier-chieftains and the men of war,  
 That thy commands are as Dárá's commands,  
 And none will swerve from fealty to thee."

She gave the envoy purses, slaves, and treasures  
 Of all kinds. When that Rúman reached Sikandar,  
 And told what he had seen and heard of court,  
 Of precedents obtaining, and of throne.

Whereon thou hadst declared: "The Sháh still liveth"  
 Sikandar was rejoiced at what was said.  
 And placed the crown in peace upon his head.

## § 4

*How Sikandar sent his Mother, Náhal, to fetch Rúshanak,  
 and how he Married her*

He called his mother from 'Ammúriya.<sup>1</sup> C. 1289  
 Told her upon her coming what Dárá  
 Had said, and added: "Go to Dilarái  
 And enter into gracious intercourse  
 With her, see Rúshanak within the bower,  
 And, having seen her, greet her on my part,  
 Take her a bracelet, earrings, torque and crown  
 Of royal gems, a hundred mules with loads  
 Of tapestries and furthermore ten camels  
 With gold brocade of Rúm, and place withal  
 In purses thirty thousand in dinars  
 Out of the treasury by way of largess.  
 And take with thee three hundred Rúman damsels.  
 Or more if more are needed. Give each one  
 A goblet worthy of a queen's fair handmaid;  
 Take servants to escort thee and forgo  
 No circumstance of royal etiquette."

The mother of the Sháh, as he commanded  
 Made ready and set off upon her journey,  
 With her interpreters escorting her—  
 Ten of the honey-tongued philosophers.  
 Now as she drew anigh to Ispahán  
 A crowd of nobles went to give her welcome,  
 While Dilárái came forward from the palace.  
 She and the magnates, as their custom was.  
 And gave such largess in the court that treasure

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 23 and *note*.

And money grew misprized. They held a conclave  
 Of counsellors within the palace: all  
 The chiefs attended: Dilárái the while  
 Prepared such wedding-gear that the bázárs  
 Looked busy everywhere, and league-long files  
 Of camels carried stuffs for clothes and carpets,  
 For hangings and for tapestries inwoven  
 With gold and silver thread, and diverse-hued.  
 There were such Arab steeds with golden bridles,  
 Such Indian scimitars with golden scabbards,  
 Surtouts and morions and bards withal,  
 With golden sparths and maces ponderous,  
 With stuffs for raiment cut or in the piece,  
 That no one in the world e'er looked on more;  
 Such aloë-wood, gris-amber, and pure musk,  
 As gave to enemies good cause to writhe.  
 They requisitioned servants from the palace,  
 And made them ready forty golden litters.  
 In one of them with parasol and slaves  
 Sat Rúshanak rejoicing. From the halls  
 Of Dilárái, for half the route, the way  
 Was all gold, jewels, horses. and attendants.  
 They raised triumphal arches in the cities;  
 All lips were smiling, all hearts full. They showered  
 Drachms on the bride's brocaded parasol,  
 And mingled overhead musk and dínárs.

C. 1290

When that Moon reached the Sháh's own bower  
 Sikandar

Much scanned her stately form and goodly face:  
 Thou hadst said: "Wisdom nurtured her on love."  
 Whenas her mother set her on the throne  
 Of gold he poured out all his soul to her,  
 And passed a se'nnight in her company,  
 Conversing much with her, observed her shrewdly,  
 And saw in her but majesty and meekness,  
 Discretion, modesty, and fair behaviour,

So that his heart was joined to her in love.  
 Then all the paladins throughout Írán  
 Called blessings down on him as Sháh, and brought  
 Great gifts of gold and royal jewelry,  
 While justice o'er the world's whole face was spread,  
 And everywhere the waste inhabited.

## § 5

*How Kaid of Hind had a Dream, and how  
 Mihrán interpreted it*

A speaker of the tongue of days of old  
 A tale that thou wilt muse to hear thus told :—  
 There was in Hind a monarch, Kaid by name,  
 Whose sole pursuit was knowledge and advice ;  
 He had a sage's heart, a prince's brain,  
 King's bearing and the Grace of archimages.  
 He dreamed a dream ten nights successively—  
 A portent : mark it well. The men of learning  
 In Hindústán, the mighty both in word  
 And lore, the sages and the counsellors,  
 Met at his bidding, and he told his dreams  
 At large without reserve ; but every heart  
 Was full of deep concern, each visage wan,  
 For there was none that could interpret them.  
 Then said a sage to Kaid : “ O sovereign,  
 Memorial of the great and man of wisdom !  
 There is a famous one by name Mihrán,  
 Who hath attained his fill of earthly lore.  
 He will not sleep or rest him in a city.  
 And liveth but with cattle of the field,  
 Subsisting on the herbs upon the mountains.  
 And not accounting us as fellow-men :  
 His home is with the onager and deer,  
 Apart from habitation and mankind :

C. 1291 Naught in the world doth injure him : devout  
Is he, and of high fortune."

To the sage

Thus said king Kaid : " One must not overlook  
This virtuous man."

Moved by Mihrán's renown

He mounted then and there upon his steed,  
While, lest he should grow downcast, men of lore  
Escorted him. The monarch reached Mihrán,  
Saluted courteously the sage, and said :—  
" Thou devotee who with the mountain-sheep  
Inhabitest the heights ! hear thou with care,  
And then interpret wisely, these my dreams :  
Know that one night, O wise and holy man !  
I slept in peace, unfrighted, undismayed,  
No care at heart, no impulse in my head,  
And in my chamber there was none with me.  
Night's noon had passed, but dawn was not. I saw  
A habitation like a vasty palace ;  
Therein a huge, fierce elephant. The dwelling  
Showed doorless, but had one strait aperture  
Wherethrough that savage elephant would pass  
Uninjured by the straitness : its black bulk  
Would pass therethrough, but leave its trunk behind.  
Next night I saw the throne devoid of lord  
Fair-fortuned, but upon the ivory seat  
Sat one who donned the heart-delighting crown.  
The third night came : I made me haste to sleep,  
And dreamed that I beheld a goodly kerchief  
Whercat four men tugged till their cheeks turned blue  
With pulling, yet the kerchief was not rent,  
Nor were the men fordone. Upon the fourth night  
I saw, illustrious sage ! a man athirst  
Beside a stream. O'er him a fish kept pouring  
The water, yet his droughty head was dry  
Although the water followed as he moved !

How read'st thou this, good friend ? Upon the fifth night  
My mind dreamed of a city by the water.  
The citizens though blind seemed none the worse,  
For thou hadst said . ' The whole place is afire  
With liberality and trafficking ! '   
Upon the sixth night, honoured lord ! I saw  
A city, all whose citizens were sick.  
And went to question those in health, who first.  
Preventing them, inquired : ' How came ye thus  
With body aching and with heart o'ercharged ? '   
And then the sick, whose soul had reached their lips, C. 1292  
Sought of the healthy for a remedy.  
When half the seventh night had passed I saw  
A horse that grazed at will upon the plain :  
It had two fore, two hind, feet, and two heads  
And cropped the grass off quickly with its teeth.  
It grazed on both sides with its double mouth  
And yet its body was without a vent !  
I saw upon the eighth night, holy man !  
Three vases on the ground set all a-row,  
Two filled with water but the central empty,  
And dry for many a year. Two worthies tried  
To fill it from the others whose contents  
Were minished not by pouring while the dry  
Remained with lip unmoistened. On the ninth night  
I dreamed that I beheld a cow reposing  
' Mid grass and water in the sun. A calf,  
Small, gaunt, and wizened, with lack-lustre face,  
Was standing just before her, and she sucked it !  
The cow was lusty and the calf was weak.  
If thou wilt lend thine ear to my tenth dream  
Thou wilt not grow weary ere I end.  
Upon a spacious plain I saw a spring  
With streams and dykes about it. All the champaign  
Was watered yet the fountain-head was dry.  
I prithee answer and reveal the future."

Mihrán, when he had heard this thing from Kaid,  
 Said : "Be not sick at heart about this dream ;  
 Thy fame shall fail not, ill not reach this realm.  
 Sikandar will lead forth a mighty host,  
 The chosen chieftains of Írán and Rúm,  
 And, if thou wouldst still rule, consort with wisdom,  
 And fight him not. Four things thou hast whose  
 equals

None, great or small, e'er saw. One is thy daughter,  
 Like Paradise above, through whom thy crown  
 Is bright on earth ; the next thy privy sage,  
 Who telleth thee the secrets of the world ;  
 The third thy worthy leech, most famed of doctors ;  
 The fourth a cup wherein, if thou pour water,  
 That water will not heat for sun or fire,  
 No drinking minish it. These will defeat  
 All his endeavours, for when he shall come  
 Confide in these, and not in war, if thou  
 Wouldst have him gone betimes. Thou canst not face  
 His troops, his strategy, his realm, and treasure.  
 As wisely I advise thee so will I  
 Interpret these thy dreams. Thou didst behold  
 A dwelling and strait aperture wherethrough  
 Passed elephant but left its trunk behind.  
 Now hear the rede of the interpreter.  
 Know that this dwelling imageth the world,  
 The elephant a thankless king, unjust,  
 False in his words, and royal but in name,  
 A man of mean heart and of feeble body,  
 Keen in his greed and gloomy in his soul.  
 At length, when he shall pass away, his name  
 Abideth in dishonour in the end.  
 Thy second dream concerning crown and throne,  
 Which one man voided and another gained,  
 Illustrateth that this inconstant world  
 Removeth one and speedeth up another.



As for thy third dream of that goodly kerchief,  
 Clutched by four righteous men yet never rent  
 Though they that tugged thereat were never weary :  
 Hereafter there will come a man renowned  
 Forth from the desert of spear-wielding horsemen,  
 A holy, virtuous man by whom the Faith  
 Of God will come to be four-square, and, know,  
 'Tis imaged by that kerchief, while the four  
 That tug thereat tug in safe-guarding it.  
 One Faith is the Dihkán's who worshippeth  
 The Fire, and taketh not the sacred twigs  
 Save with a muttered prayer.<sup>1</sup> Another one  
 Is that of Moses, which thou call'st the Jew's.  
 Who saith : ' None other should be praised ' : another  
 That of Yúnán,<sup>2</sup> a good Faith making just  
 The great king's<sup>3</sup> heart ; and, fourth, the Arabian,  
 Pure and exalting from the dust the prudent.  
 Four parties thus assuming to be guardians  
 Tug at the kerchief in their several ways.  
 And, as they pull against each other thus,  
 Antagonize for their religion's sake.  
 Then, fourthly, for the doughty man who shunned  
 Sweet water which a fish threw after him :  
 A time will come when holy men will be  
 Just like that fish, despised as having drunk  
 Of wisdom's stream ; but evil-doers' heads  
 Will be exalted to the Pleiades.  
 When one shall call the thirsty to the water  
 None wisely will respond, but all will shun  
 The wisdom-seeker and combine to curse him.  
 In thy fifth dream thou sawest a busy city.  
 The burghers spent their lives in feasting, largess,  
 And trafficking, but ' Fortune,' thou hadst said,

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. pp. 80, 81 s.v. *Dihkán*, *Bij*, and *Barsam*.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* Javan, the son of Japheth and the progenitor of the Greeks

<sup>3</sup> Sikandar.

C. 1294

'Had sewn their eyes up so that none could see  
 Another.' This referreth to a time  
 When wise men will be slaves to ignorant,  
 Who will despise the erudite and these,  
 Their tree of wisdom fruiting not for them,  
 Will laud, and openly commend, the witless,  
 Though conscious of their own hypocrisy,  
 And that such service is inglorious.  
 As for the sixth dream, when the ailing sick  
 All went to question those in health: a time  
 Will come wherein the wretched mendicant  
 Will be misprizèd in the rich man's eyes.  
 And turn in his resourcelessness to any  
 Possessed of goods, who will not give him aught,  
 So that he will become a wageless servant,  
 Or else a slave without the purchasing.  
 As for the ventless and two-headed steed  
 Of thy seventh dream: a time will come when men  
 Will joy in wealth and never have enough.  
 The beggar, student, and celebrity  
 Will get no share from them, for they will think  
 Of no one save themselves and help not any.  
 As to thine eighth dream of two vases brimming,  
 And one left wholly void, two vases filled  
 With lucid water, and the middle one  
 All dry and moistureless: a time will come  
 Wherein the poor will grow so weak and wretched  
 That, though the clouds of springtide, charged with  
 showers,  
 Shall hide the sunshine from the mendicant,  
 Those very showers not e'en then will descend  
 On him, and he will be heart-stricken. The rich  
 Will lavish gifts among themselves and bandy  
 Their honied compliments while beggars go  
 With droughty lips and so pass day to night.  
 As for the ninth wherein a lusty cow

Sucked its lean calf: when Saturn entereth Libra  
 The world will be beneath the strong arm, poor  
 And sick fare ill, and yet the well-to-do  
 Will still exact from them, will never open  
 Their own hoards, nor abate the others' travail.  
 In thy tenth dream thou sawest a fountain dry,  
 With waters all about it savouring musk,  
 Yet no clear stream of water bubbled forth.  
 And sped to mingle with those other waters.<sup>1</sup>  
 A time is coming when the world will have  
 A king that is devoid of understanding,  
 A king whose dark soul will be full of dudgeon,  
 The whole world gloom beneath his tyranny,  
 And never good be found among his treasures.  
 He ever will be gathering fresh hosts  
 To win his crown new fame, but in the end  
 This monarch and his hosts will pass away,  
 And there will be a change of dynasty.  
 But our time is the epoch of Sikandar,  
 Who is the crown upon the heads of nobles.  
 Upon his coming give him these four things:<sup>2</sup>  
 Methinketh not that he will ask for more,  
 But, when thou dost content him, pass thee by,  
 For he is diligent to learn and wise."

C. 1295

Kaid, having heard the matter from Miharān,  
 Regained the vigour of his former years,  
 Came, kissed the sage's head and eyes, and went  
 His ways triumphant, happy, and content.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this may mean "I have patrons among the nobles but Mahmūd is obdurate." Cf. what follows and Vol. i. p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.* the Four Wonders. Cf. p. 94.

## § 6

*How Sikandar marched against Kaid of Hind  
and wrote a Letter to him*

Now when Sikandar had surveyed Írán,  
And knew that crown and throne were his, he led  
His host toward Kaid of Hind and, road or none,  
Pursued his march, while as he went along  
The people of the cities on his way  
Unbarred their gates to him. In all that coast  
He found none worthy to be called a man,  
And raised his helm o'er Venus. On approaching  
The mighty city, named by valiant Kaid  
Mílád, they called a scribe and seated him  
Before Sikandar who, like lion lusting  
For quarry, wrote to Kaid: "This from Sikandar  
The mighty and victorious, the lord  
Of scimitar, of crown, and belt."

The letter

Began with praises of the man that laveth  
His heart with knowledge, "for in his desire  
To eat the fruitage of his toils he chooseth  
The easiest course, adoreth holy God,  
And trusteth. feareth, reverenceth Him,  
While knowing that we top the throne and are  
The Shadow of the all-conquering Lord. Now I  
Have written thee a letter to enlighten  
Thy darkling mind; so when thy scribe shall read it  
Lay it not out before thee and consider,  
But. if it come by night, wait not for day,  
And do my will forthwith. If thou shalt slight  
My words so will not I, but trample down  
Beneath my feet thy throne and head and crown."

## § 7

*How Kaid of Hind answered Sikandar's Letter and announced the Sending of the Four Wonders*

Now when this letter came to Kaid of Hind C. 1296  
 He interviewed the great king's envoy, praised  
 And favoured him exceedingly, assigned him  
 In courtesy a seat upon the throne,  
 And said: "I joy to do the Sháh's behest,  
 And alway will be true to him: but still  
 That one so great as I am should set forward  
 So quickly and unready would please not  
 The Maker and the monarch of the earth."

Then calling for a scribe, for pen of Chín,  
 And silk of Hind, he wrote at once an answer,  
 And decked it like the garth of Paradise.  
 He gave, first, praises to the Omnipotent,  
 The Lord of victory and time, the Lord  
 Both generous and just, the Lord of manhood,  
 Of sense and prowess; then: "The good man's head  
 Will turn not from the great, illustrious king,  
 Nor are we well advised in keeping aught  
 From him who hath the army, crown, and sword.  
 Four things have I that none else in the world  
 E'er hath possessed in public or in private,  
 And after me none will possess the like.  
 These, if the Shah shall bid me, I will send  
 To give new vigour to his heart and rule  
 And afterward, if he commandeth me,  
 Will come and slave-like do him fealty."

## § 8

*How Sikandar sent back the Messenger to receive the  
Four Wonders*

The envoy came as swiftly as the wind.  
Told all that he had heard, and gave the letter.  
Sikandar said to him : " Go to, return  
To that famed man, and say : ' What things are these  
That none e'er had in public or in private.  
For we ourselves have seen whatever is,  
And heaven will not create afresh ! ' "

The envoy

Went from the presence, journeyed swift as fire,  
C 1297 And said to Kaid : " The Sháh is fain to know  
What things they are that no one else possesseth.  
For seeing is believing."

When he heard,

Kaid cleared the court and sat with his advisers  
In council, set the envoy in his presence,  
And courteously entreated him. then said :—  
" I have within my bower a daughter such  
That if the sun on high should gaze on her  
'Twould gloom contrasted with my darling's face.  
Her locks are lassos of one hue with pitch,  
Milk savoureth on her lips, a cypress-stem  
Is crooked to her, she scattereth pearls in speech.  
Her looks and countenance make wisdom fly,  
Yet 'tis the food of her discourse. When silent  
She is the soul of modesty, and none  
Hath seen her peer in this age. Sprung from chiefs,  
And pious, she is chaste of heart and modest.  
I have a cup which thou mayst fill with wine,  
Or pour therein cold water. and although  
Thou sat'st with boon-companions for ten years

The wine would fail not : whether wine or water  
 The cup affordeth thee, the marvel is :  
 No drinking draineth it. My third possession  
 Is this : a youthful leech who diagnoseth  
 Disease by making a uroscopy.  
 So long as he is at the court the Sháh  
 Will never ail ; and fourthly. I possess,  
 Though privily, a sage who will foretell  
 The Sháh all that will chance from circling sun  
 And shining moon."

The noble messenger  
 Withdrew, made wind his mate. came and informed  
 Sikandar, and the heart of the world-king  
 Bloomed like a rose. He said : " If what is spoken  
 Be true could this world purchase all the four ?  
 Kaid will illume my dark soul if he send them.  
 His country 'neath my feet I will not tread,  
 But with this good will hie me home instead."

### § 9

*How Sikandar sent Ten<sup>1</sup> Sages with a Letter to inspect the  
 Four Wonders of Kaid of Hind*

The Sháh made choice of Rúmans learnèd, wise.  
 And well disposed, then wrote a letter all  
 Excuse and perfume, colour and device :—  
 " Ten trusty chiefs of mine, world-veteran,  
 And in my confidence, wise men and modest,  
 Endowed with Grace and counsel, shrewd observers.  
 Learned and directing, lo ! I have dispatched thee :  
 They will not deviate from thy shrewd counsels.  
 Exhibit those four wonders unto them.  
 And suffer them to stay with thee awhile.  
 When I receive the letter of mine ancients,  
 Those men expert and erudite, to say :—

C. 1298

<sup>1</sup> Nine in P.

‘The four things—those whose like none e’er beheld—  
Have passed before our eyes, I will indite  
A patent drawn on silk to this effect :—  
‘Kaid, while he liveth, is the king of Hind.’”

So those ten Rúman sages left Sikandar,  
And sped to Kaid who, when he saw those chiefs,  
Had much to ask of them and heard their answers.  
Received them graciously and lodged them featly.

Next day, when heaven grew pallid and the sun  
Drew forth its sword of battle, they adorned,  
Although the moon requireth no adornment,  
The monarch’s daughter. and within the palace  
Set up, and decked with ornaments of Chín.  
A golden throne whereon she sat sun-faced.  
Outshining Venus in the sky. The sages.  
Those ancient men. fair-spoken and observant,  
Drew near. The monarch sent them to the bride,  
As bade Sikandar, son of Failakús.  
The ancients, seeing the king’s daughter’s face  
Illumining the palace, crown, and throne,  
Were lost in wonder and astonishment ;  
Feet failed them at the sight. They stood stock-still,  
Their tongues all busied with the praise of God,  
Unable to withdraw or look elsewhere.  
Till one arrived to call them, since they lingered.  
Before the king, who said : “ Why such delay ?  
The owner of that face is but a human,  
Endowed with goodliness by every star.”

A Rúman answered : “ None, O king ! beholdeth  
A picture like her in his halls : so now  
We each of us will send the Sháh a letter  
Describing somewhat of the lady’s charms.”

They all sat down with paper, ink, and pens.  
Each wrote what he had noted, covering all  
The paper with his words ; then from <sup>1</sup> Milád

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.



They sent in haste a horseman to Sikandar,  
 Who marvelled as he read, for every sage  
 Had written some description of the lady.  
 He wrote to them and said : " Ye have done well.  
 Ye ancients ! ye have looked on Paradise.  
 Return with those four things and ask naught else.  
 When ye have given the patent unto Kaid  
 Make ready for the way and load the beasts.  
 No man henceforth shall do him injury,  
 For I have found him just, and that sufficeth."

C. 129c

The envoy quitted that green country-side,  
 And to those Rúman ancients' presence hied.

## § 10

*How the Ten Sages brought the Daughter, the Cup, the  
 Leech, and the Sage, from Kaid of Hind to Sikandar*

Now when those sages heard their Sháh's reply,  
 Brought by the toilful cavalier, they went  
 Forth from their palace and approached king Kaid.  
 And his famed court. The king of Hindústán.  
 When he had read the answer to his letter—  
 The message of the imperious world-aspirant—  
 Joyed to be free from trouble with Sikandar,  
 And chose withal a hundred men of Hind  
 Of honied tongue and eloquent, unlocked  
 Hoards not by him amassed, and chose therefrom  
 Crown, throne, and armlet, and of gems withal,  
 And raiment in the piece, all that was best.  
 They brought three hundred camel-loads of raiment.  
 And royal jewelry ; ten of dínárs,  
 And five score all of drachms. there was withal  
 A splendid litter of green aloe-wood.  
 Inlaid with gold and gems. Kaid placed gold thrones  
 Upon ten elephants and on another.

More splendidly caparisoned, the Beauty,  
 Who was escorted by the sage and leech,  
 And showered tears of blood. A magnate bare  
 The cup, whose wine made all the chiefs bemused.  
 When that Moon reached the royal women's house  
 There was a crown of black musk on her head;  
 She had let fall her tresses o'er her cheeks,  
 Like mail o'er cercis-blossom, and appeared  
 A slender cypress 'neath the full orb'd moon.  
 C. 1300 To gaze was perilous. Her eyes were like  
 To twin narcissi grown in Paradise.  
 Thou wouldst have said: "She is compact of charms."  
 Sikandar gazed upon her stately form.  
 Her hair, her face, and all from head to foot,  
 And said: "Behold the Lustre of the world!"  
 While privily invoking benisons  
 Upon the All-just, the Maker of the sky,  
 Who had created such a form and face.  
 He gave command, and all the men of lore,  
 And understanding, in the host of Rúm  
 Sat by while he demanded her in marriage,  
 The which he solemnised with Christian rites,  
 And showered dínars upon her from above  
 Out of his hoards till scarcely she could move.

## § 11

*How Sikandar tested the Sage, the Leech, and the Cup sent  
by Kaid of Hind*

The matter of the Cypress-tree<sup>1</sup> achieved,  
 And an abode fit for her rank prepared,  
 The Sháh was free to find out how the sage

<sup>1</sup> The daughter of Kaid.

Would come off in a strife of wits, and so  
He sent a large bowl all abrim with ghee  
To that redoubtable philosopher,  
And said: "Anoint thy limbs herewith, loins, waist,  
Breast, back, and neck withal, repose thyself  
Till thou hast shaken off thy weariness,  
Then fill for me my mind and brain with knowledge."

The sage, when he beheld the ghee, observed:—  
'This should not prove a mystery to me!'

He placed a thousand needles in the bowl,  
And then returned it to the sovereign,  
Who, when he saw them, summoned privily  
A smith and bade him melt them to an ingot,  
And fashion out of it a disk. Sikandar  
Dispatched this to the sage who furbished it,  
And sent back in the place of that dull iron  
A mirror free from rust and luminous.  
They took this to Sikandar in the night,  
Who, saying naught, exposed it to the wet  
Till it grew dark and dull; then he returned it,  
And thus prolonged the riddle of the iron.  
The sage refurbished it to brilliancy,  
And sent it back forthwith, but first applied  
That which would prove preservative from damp.  
Sikandar, seeing, called to him the sage  
And, greetings done, assigned to him a seat  
Below the throne, then spake about the bowl  
Of ghee to further test that famed man's wit,  
Who said: "Ghee will not penetrate the frame.  
Thou said'st: 'I pass the sages of the state  
In knowledge.' I replied: 'O mighty Shāh!  
A man that is both wise of heart and pure  
Will like a needle pierce both feet and bones.  
Or e'en a stone if one is in the way.'  
I said in fact to thee: 'My goodly speech,  
My heart and soul and prudent purposes

Make use of words still finer than a hair,  
 And thou hast not a heart more dense than iron.  
 Thy answer to me was: 'In bygone years  
 My heart grew rusty in the midst of bloodshed.  
 How shall the gloom depart, for why should I  
 Continue thus distraught?' I answered thee:—  
 'I will refurbish by celestial wisdom  
 Thy heart if it becometh malcontent,  
 And when it shineth with a brilliant lustre  
 How shall it rust again?' "

His goodly words  
 Found favour with the Sháh whose heart grew keener  
 By dint of the procedure of the sage.  
 He ordered that the treasurer should bring  
 A robe, gold, silver, and a vase of gems.  
 These they presented to the sage who said:—  
 "I have a privy jewel of mine own,  
 Which is both brighter and immune from foes,  
 And not, like wealth, the mate of Áhriman.  
 I need not hire a watchman for the night,  
 And when I go abroad I fear no thieves,  
 Since in the night-time knowledge is my warden,  
 And wisdom my soul's crown when it is waking,<sup>1</sup>  
 For wisdom, knowledge, right, are necessities  
 Since error knocketh at the door of loss.  
 The Sháh will see that I have food and raiment  
 Enough for public and for private uses:  
 Why should I joy in superfluities.  
 And have to safeguard all this wealth? Command  
 To carry back these havings, and may wisdom  
 Direct thy soul."

Sikandar mused at him,  
 And turned the matter o'er. then said: "The Lord  
 Of sun and moon will find me not in fault  
 In future since I have thy counsel, rede,

<sup>1</sup> Order of couplets as in P.

And useful talk."

He bade the leech approach  
That judged diseases by uroscopy,  
And asked: "Who is the greatest sufferer  
Whose pangs compel our tears?"

The leech replied:—

"The glutton, one without restraint at table.  
Excessive food conduceth not to health.  
And great is he who maketh health his aim.  
Now will I gather herbs from every side,  
And will exhibit unto thee a medicine,  
One that will keep thee sound; no need to purge; C. 1302  
Thine appetites will greaten too, and when  
Thou eatest much it will not injure thee.  
Heed thou my skilled advice, then blood and brain  
Will wax in thee, thou wilt grow strong of frame.  
Thy heart will be as blithe as jocund spring.  
'Twill bring back colour to thy face and make  
Thy judgment sound in all, thy flowing locks  
Shall turn not grey, not soon shalt thou despond."

Sikandar said: "I have not seen or heard  
Of any king thus favoured, but if thou  
Produce this noble potion thou wilt be  
My guide to good, and I with mine own soul  
Will purchase thee. The malice of thy foes  
Shall harm thee not."

Sikandar got prepared  
A robe of honour and fair gifts for him.  
And made him chief among the learned physicians.  
That suasive leech departed to the mountains  
Without attendants. With his ample knowledge  
He could distinguish bane and antidote.  
And, having gathered many mountain-herbs,  
And put the worthless by, chose such as were  
Medicinal, and out of these compounded  
The needed potion. With these mountain-simples

He purged the Sháh and kept him sound and whole,  
So that for nights he slept not but enjoyed  
Society, affected much the Fair.

And sought their soft embraces till he ailed.

Because he tendered not himself, and so

One day the leech came, by uroscopy

Detected signs of decadence, and told him :—

“ Youths surely age by intercourse with women :

Methinketh that for three nights thou hast slept not :

Speak unto me and give me a reply.”

Howbeit Sikandar answered : “ I am well :

None of the ills of life is troubling me.”

Yet still the approven leech of Hindústán

Would not admit the matter to be so,

But sought that night among his books, and mixed

A medicine against that decadence.

That night Sikandar had no lovely mate.

The leech, when morning came, found him alone,

And, having ended the uroscopy,

Flung down the potion, sat in high delight,

And, taking in his hand a goblet, bade

The board be spread and wine and minstrels ordered.

C. 1303 The Sháh inquired : “ Why hast thou poured away

The draught that thou hadst mixed so carefully ? ”

He said : “ Last night the world-lord sought no mate

But slept alone, and when thou sleepest thus

Thou needest, sire ! no draught.”

Sikandar smiled,

Delighted with the leech, to whom he said :—

“ Ne’er may this world lack Hind, for thou wouldst say

That all the leeches and astrologers

Flock thither.”

Calling for a purse of gold,

And for a sable steed whose reins were hung

With golden balls, he gave that skilled leech both,

And said : “ Be honest rede thy tongue’s companion.”

Then bade he, and they brought the golden goblet  
Brimmed with cold water. All folk drank thereof  
From morn till bed-time as in revelry,  
But all the drinking did not minish it.  
Then to the sage the Sháh said: "Kaid hath not  
His equal in the world, and from this time  
No longer shall we speak of Hindústán.  
But Jádústán,<sup>1</sup> as being Kaid's abode.  
The people are no more than other folk  
In looks but wonderful in tricks and magic!"

Then said the Sháh to that philosopher:—  
"This knowledge must not be concealed from us:  
How is the water in the cup renewed?  
Is it the stars or Indian jugglery?"

"Despise not, sire! the cup," the sage replied.  
"For they were many years in making it,  
And labours underwent in that behoof.  
From all the provinces the astrologers,  
Where'er there was a master known to fame,  
Assisted Kaid, when fashioning the cup,  
Both day and night, and passed full many a day  
In noting all the aspects of the stars.  
Take thou the loadstone, that wherewith a man  
Attracteth iron, as an illustration.  
This cup by innate force attracteth water,  
Receiving fresh additions from the sky.  
It catcheth water to replace the waste  
Too quickly for man's eyes to follow it."

The Sháh, on hearing that wise man's discourse,  
Approved thereof: he thought the words of profit.  
Thus said he to the elders of Milád:—

"I will observe the compact made with Kaid  
In honour while I live, for he is one  
Before whose presence other folk should stand.  
Since I have gotten from him four such things

<sup>1</sup> Sorcerer-land.

We will not ask for more."

Now afterward

C. 1304 Sikandar set the goods that he possessed,  
 With all the treasures that he had amassed,  
 And therewithal a hundred jewelled crowns,  
 Upon two hundred carriers and stored  
 All with dínars and jewels in the rough,  
 Upon a mountain. When they vanished there  
 None saw again what was repositied ;  
 From that time forward no one e'er beheld  
 That treasure and the men that hoarded it.  
 Sikandar only knew where, hid from sight,  
 Were laid those treasures on the mountain-height.<sup>1</sup>

### § 12

• *How Sikandar led a Host against Fúr of Hind and  
 wrote a Letter to him*

Sikandar swift as wind marched from Mílád,  
 Abandoning his treasures, reached Kannúj  
 And, having led his army near to Fúr,  
 Bade write to him a harsh and hostile letter  
 As from Sikandar, king of kings, the son  
 Of Failakús, the illuminer of knowledge.  
 Of weal and woe, to Fúr, the king of Hind,  
 High-starred, and chief of Sind.

First praised he God,

Who hath been and will be for ever. Then :—

" With one whom He hath made victorious  
 Realm, crown, and throne will last, whom He despiseth  
 Will be still wretched and the sun on high  
 Will shine not on him. Surely thou hast heard  
 What in this darksome earth all holy God  
 Hath given to us of victory and fortune,

<sup>1</sup> Sikandar's method of hiding his treasures bears a suspicious resemblance to that of Captains Kidd and Flint.



Grace, diadem, and throne of king of kings,  
 But not for long : our day will pass ; another  
 Will come and be partaker of these fruits.  
 And so I strive to leave an honoured name  
 In this small circle compassed by the Moon.  
 When they deliver this possess thy soul,  
 Thine unenlightened soul, with what is right.  
 Exchange thy throne of greatness for thy steed,  
 Advise not with the priests, thy counsellors.  
 But ask immunity from us, and practise  
 No craft because the crafty labour long.  
 If, in thy pride and thine audacity,  
 Thou wilt not do my bidding thou shalt rue  
 Thy dallying when with my cavaliers  
 I come to fight with thee."

When thus these words

Had been indited, and the scribe had done,  
 They sealed the letter with Sikandar's signet.  
 And for the journey chose a prudent envoy,  
 Who reached the court of Fúr and held discourse  
 At whiles of strife, at whiles of feast and revel.  
 They summoned to the king that man discreet,  
 And by the throne appointed him a seat.

### § 13

#### *How Fúr answered the Letter of Sikandar*

Bold Fúr, when he had read the letter, raged  
 Against that famous magnate and forthwith  
 Wrote fiercely in reply, and set a tree  
 Within the garth of vengeance. He began :—  
 " 'Tis ours to fear and reverence holy God.  
 We will not speak so many empty words ;  
 The boaster is a man without resource.  
 Art thou so shameless as to summon me ?

C. 1305

Is wisdom to thy mind so light a thing ?  
 If Failakús on this wise wrote to Fúr  
 Do thou begin too and provoke a quarrel !  
 But 'tis Dárá who thus hath heartened thee,  
 Because of him revolving heaven was weary,  
 And when good fortune goeth from a race  
 They heed not the advice of counsellors.  
 Thy strife with Kaid was but a merry-make ;  
 Thou thinkest kings thy prey. No such address  
 Or words proceeded from the ancient Kaians.  
 Fúr am I and the son of Fúr. We take  
 No thought of Cæsars. When Dárá asked help.  
 And I perceived his heart and fortune failing,  
 I sent him mighty elephants and gave him  
 Words of encouragement. When he was slain  
 By that slave's hand the Íránians' fortunes fell,  
 And when earth's face was franchised from Dárá  
 That trenchant bane became thine antidote.  
 Why lose thy head because bad ministers  
 Ill-treated him ? Talk not of war so proudly,  
 Because with me it is another story.  
 Thou shalt behold my mighty elephants  
 And host, which bar the wind, confronting thee.  
 Thy whole aim is supremacy, thy nature  
 One rust with Áhriman. Do not thou sow  
 The seed of harshness in the world, but be  
 In fear of misadventure and the ills  
 Of fortune. In this letter 'twas my part  
 To seek thy welfare and instruct thy heart."

## § 14

*How Sikandar arrayed his Host to fight with Fúr of Hind  
 and made iron Steeds and Riders filled with Naphtha*

C. 1306      Forthwith Sikandar, when Fúr's answer reached him,  
 Chose from the host chiefs fit and enterprising,

Young but mature in wisdom, and led forth  
 To war against that Indian such an army  
 That all the earth seemed sea, and thou hadst said :—  
 “Sikandar is sole monarch in the world.”

But all those mountains, seas, and rugged paths  
 Quenched in the soldiers' hearts the flame of war  
 The troops were all aweary of a march  
 By roads so grievous, steep, and profitless.  
 Once at a stage they gathered round the Sháh  
 And said : “O Caesar and the lord of Chín”  
 Earth is not able to sustain thy host.  
 Not Fúr of Hind, not the Faghfúr himself,  
 Or king of Sind, will seek to fight with thee.  
 Why must thou bring disaster on thy troops  
 By this vile country and by such a road ?  
 We see no sound steed left whereon to fight  
 With vigour, and if e'er the troops turn back  
 From warfare neither horse nor foot will find  
 The way. When we have triumphed hitherto  
 It hath been o'er an army of our foes,  
 But now we are opposed by seas and mountains,  
 And none of us is weary of his life.  
 Convert not all our glory into shame :  
 None hath made war with water and with rocks.”

The words displeased Sikandar, and in wrath  
 He frustrated their scheme. “Such words,” thus said  
 he,

“Befit but mutineers. What time I marched  
 From Rúm Íránward we beheld all garden  
 And settlement, our Rúman slain reached not  
 A hundred, and our costs were small. Írán  
 Is yours. What better could ye ask of God ?  
 Ill came upon Dára from his own slaves.  
 No one of you hath seen one weak or wounded”  
 I will proceed without you and set foot  
 Upon the Dragon's heart. Come what come may

C. 1307 Of fight and feast henceforth ye shall behold me  
 Abandon not for good my task with Fúr.  
 What time I quit him I will march to Rúm,  
 And by my valour overcome the land.  
 With God to aid me, and Íránian troops,  
 I ask not I a Rúman to befriend me."

On seeing that their words enraged the Sháh  
 The troops sought to excuse themselves, and said :—  
 " We all are Cæsar's slaves, we only walk  
 The earth to do his hest, will strive, and when  
 Our horses fail will foot it to the field  
 Of strife. Though foes make earth sea with our blood,  
 And valleys into mountains with our fallen,  
 None in the day of fight shall see our backs  
 Though sea and mountain-crag contend with us.  
 We all are slaves, and it is thine to bid :  
 In thy calamities our lives are thine."

Sikandar, hearing this, prepared fresh strife,  
 And chose a hundred thousand of Írán,  
 Equipped for war. Behind were Rúman captains.  
 All clad in mail, and stalwart warriors.  
 Thus forty thousand veteran cavaliers  
 Marched in support of the Íránians.  
 Succeeding these came mounted men world-taking,  
 And falchion-brandishers, from Misr. Then Cæsar  
 Chose from the men of Rúm. Misr, and Barbar  
 Twelve thousand cavaliers efficient, martial.  
 For battle eager all and all renowned.  
 So that with this array supporting him  
 The dales and plains seemed heights ! He took withal  
 Of readers of the stars and priests three score—  
 Wise men well known to fame and veteran—  
 To choose the days for battle.

When Fúr heard :—  
 " A host hath come" he picked his battle-field,  
 And all his troops assembled on the plain ;

The earth was mountain-like with elephants.  
The army stretched four miles with troops behind  
And elephants in front.

Now spies arrived  
From Hind before the world-lord and informed him  
At large of how the elephant contendeth  
In warfare: "It will rout two miles of horse.  
No cavalier will dare to face that beast,  
Or, if he did so, ever come again.  
Because its trunk is higher than the air,  
And Saturn is its helper in the sky."

They drew a picture of an elephant.  
And showed it to Sikandar who commanded  
That the philosophers of Rûm should model  
One out of wax for him, and then inquired:—  
"Who can propound a scheme to cope with such?"

The sages held a session and devised  
A plan in all its details. Then the Shâh  
Assembled all the master-smiths of Rûm. C. 1308  
Of Misr, and Pârs, twelve hundred men in sum,  
Who made a horse, with saddle and with rider  
Complete of iron, fastening the joints  
With bolts and rivets. Horse and man were furbished.  
They charged it with black naphtha, and then ran it  
On wheels before the troops. At sight thereof  
Sikandar was well pleased for, being wise,  
He felt the gain thereof, and bade to make  
A thousand such and more: who e'er beheld  
On chargers dappled chestnut, black, and grey  
An iron host! The matter took the month,  
And then the workmen rested from their labours.  
Thus led they forth on wheels an iron host  
That of all things resembled horsemen most.

## § 15

*How the Host of Sikandar fought with the Host of Fúr,  
how Fúr was slain by Sikandar, and how Sikandar  
seated Sacurg upon the Throne of Fúr*

Now when Sikandar was approaching Fúr.  
And from afar one host beheld the other,  
On both sides rose the shout and dust of battle.  
And eager for the fray the warriors  
Advanced. They lit the naphtha in the steeds:  
Fúr's troops were in dismay. The naphtha blazed:  
Fúr's troops recoiled because those steeds were iron.  
Whereat the elephants, when their own trunks  
Were scorched, fled likewise, and their drivers marvelled.  
Thus all the Indian host and all those huge,  
High-crested elephants were put to flight.  
Sikandar like a raging blast pursued  
The foe until the air turned indigo,  
And opportunity for fight was over.

The monarch with the Rúmans in full force  
Dismounted 'twixt two mountains and sent scouts  
On all the roads to guard his host from foes.  
Now when the ingot of the sun's crown showed,  
And all the world became as 'twere white crystal.  
There rose a blare of trumpets and the sound  
Of fife, of cornpipe, and of kettledrum.  
Both hosts made ready for the fray and raised  
Their spear-heads to the clouds. Sikandar came  
Between the lines, with Rúman sword in hand,  
And sent a cavalier to cry from far  
To Fúr: "Sikandar hath come forth and seeketh  
An interview with thee. He is prepared  
To name his own conditions and hear thine,  
And if thy terms are just he is amene."

C. 1309

When Fúr, the Indian, heard the herald's words

He rushed forth from the centre of his troops.  
Sikandar said to him : " O noble man !  
Our two hosts have been shattered by the fight,  
The wild beasts batten on the brains of men,  
The horses' hoofs are trampling on their bones.  
Now both of us are heroes brave and young,  
Both paladins of eloquence and brain,  
Why then should slaughter be the soldiers' lot,  
Or bare survival after combating ?  
Let us two arm ourselves and fight it out  
Since one of us must needs obtain the realm.  
When one of us hath proved victorious,  
The troops, the crown, and throne all will be his."

Fúr joyfully agreed to fight Sikandar,  
For well he knew that he had lion-strength,  
And rode a charger dragon-like, whereas  
Sikandar was a reed-like cavalier,  
Armed lightly and ill-mounted, so he said :—  
" Agreed : we will engage in single combat."

Both took their swords and wheeled between the lines,  
But when Sikandar realised the bulk  
Of that mad Elephant, who rode a Mountain  
And grasped a Dragon he grew dazed in fight,  
Despaired of life at heart and kept his distance,  
Till, as he wheeled with Fúr upon the field,  
A mighty shout arose behind the host,  
Which filled Fúr's heart with dudgeon and distracted  
His heart and eyes and ears. Then like a blast  
Sikandar issued from the dust and smote  
The hero with his sword, clove crest, head, neck,  
And from the steed the body sank to earth.  
The Rúman army raised its head to heaven,  
The warriors charged. Now Fúr possessed a drum  
Of lion-skin whose sound rose o'er the clouds,  
That drum's din and the trumpets' blare arose,  
Earth turned to iron, air to ebony.

While by that token those brave troops of Hind  
 Advanced to face their foes, but from the plain  
 Was proclamation made: "Ye righteous men,  
 The chiefest of the realm of Hindústán:  
 The head of Indian Fúr is in the dust,  
 His elephantine form is cloven asunder.

C. 1310

What is the purpose of this present struggle,  
 Such strife of scimitars, and such reluctance?  
 What Fúr was to you is Sikandar now,  
 And ye must look to him in fight and feast."

The warriors of Hindústán assented:  
 They went and saw Fúr's head all dust and blood,  
 His body hacked up by the scimitar.  
 A bitter cry ascended from his troops.  
 Who dropped their weapons and went grieved and  
 wailing

To Cæsar, dust upon their heads. Sikandar  
 Restored the weapons of the warriors,  
 Addressed them with all courtesy, and said:—  
 "Though Fúr of Hind is dead ye need not yield  
 Your hearts to grief because I will entreat you  
 More graciously than he did, I will banish  
 Both fear and anguish from them, and will give  
 In largess all his treasures. To my troops  
 These are forbidden. I will make the folk  
 Of Hind all wealthy and administer  
 The crown and throne with vigour."

Thence he mounted

With mingled feelings to the throne of Fúr.

So is it with this Hostel by the way!  
 It never is content to let thee stay.  
 Enjoy, leave naught for other folks to take;  
 Why shouldst thou labour for another's sake?

For two months Cæsar filled the throne and lavished  
 Fúr's whole wealth on his troops. There was a man  
 Of parts, Sawurg by name, a mighty chief



Of Hindústán; to him Sikandar gave  
 The throne of kingship. "Never hoard dínárs,"  
 He said. "Give and enjoy whate'er thou gettest.  
 Not glorying in the fleeting crown and throne,  
 For whiles it is Sikandar and whiles Fúr.  
 Whiles pain and wrath, whiles feast and banqueting."

Bestowing as a present on his host  
 Drachms and dínárs he ordered all that coast.

§ 16

*How Sikandar went on a Pilgrimage to the House of the Kaaba*

Now in a little while, when all the troops  
 Were satiate of wealth, a sudden impulse  
 Came on Sikandar, and he greatly longed  
 To journey to the Kaaba. So at dawn  
 The drum-roll rose,<sup>1</sup> the air grew like the eye  
 Of chanticleer, while all the mass of spears.  
 And silken pennons, formed a canopy  
 Of yellow, red, and violet.<sup>2</sup> Sikandar  
 Departed with his diadem and treasures  
 To look upon the house of Ibráhím.  
 Who bare no little toil to build that shrine,  
 Which God hath named Baitu'l Harám, and there  
 Thou hast His perfect Way who calleth it.  
 By reason of its purity. His house  
 And thither summoneth His worshippers,  
 Though needing not the world, or any place.  
 Or food, enjoyment, rest, or blandishment;  
 But still, since place had being, that hath been  
 A place of worship—God's memorial.  
 Sikandar then drew near to Kádísí.  
 World-conquering up to Jahram of Párs.

C. 1311

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

<sup>2</sup> Couplet omitted.

When news of him reached Nasr, son of Katíb.  
 Who was the Grace and ornament of Mecca,  
 He went to meet the Sháh with warlike chiefs,  
 And valiant, spear-armed cavaliers. Meanwhile  
 From Mecca sped a horseman to Sikandar  
 And said: "The famous chief now on his way,  
 But not in quest of treasure, crown, and host,  
 Is sprung from Ismá'il, the prophet, son  
 Of Ibráhím, the favoured of the stars."

When Nasr arrived Sikandar welcomed him,  
 Assigning him an honourable rank.  
 Nasr, joying, told Sikandar of his race,  
 And of his secret purposes. He answered:—  
 "Good-hearted chieftain, speaker of the truth!  
 Who, next to thee, is greatest, most esteemed.  
 And honoured in the tribe!"

Nasr said: "O world-lord!

Khuzá' is master here. When Ismá'il  
 Had passed away Kahtán, the monarch, came  
 With mighty hosts of swordsmen from the waste,  
 And seized the country of Yaman unjustly.  
 Of our race many guiltless folk were slain.  
 So that the day was over for our tribe.  
 Now this displeased the Maker of the world;  
 High Heaven frowned upon Kahtán: but when  
 He was reduced to dust Khuzá' appeared,  
 Unjust, audacious, and tyrannical;  
 All from Harám<sup>1</sup> up to Yaman is his,  
 His angle is within the sea of Misr.  
 He hath transgressed from justice and the way,  
 And hath no thought of goodness in his heart,  
 The world is in his clutch, the hearts of all  
 The race of Ismá'il are full."

On hearing,  
 Sikandar slew such scions of Khuzá'

<sup>1</sup> Mecca and the Kaaba.

As he could find and scalped them sparing none  
 Of friend or foe, delivering Hajáz,  
 And therewithal Yaman, from the oppressor  
 By policy and by his warrior-swordsmen,  
 And set up of the seed of Ismá'il  
 All that were worthy of supremacy.  
 He visited afoot Baitu'l Harám ;  
 The seed of Ismá'il rejoiced in him.  
 At every step of Cæsar's pilgrimage  
 His treasurer showered dínárs. The Sháh, when he  
 Returned and reached the throne, bestowed on Nasr  
 Dínárs and treasure while the mendicant,  
 And they that lived by toil, grew free from want.

C. 1312

## § 17

*How Sikandar led his Troops from Judda toward Misr*

He led his army thence with all dispatch,  
 And came to Judda. He abode not long  
 But bade the soldiers build abundant ships  
 And transports, and departed with his host  
 For Misr. The monarch there was named Kabtún :  
 His troops exceeded all imagining.  
 On hearing that a conquering king had come  
 Forth from Harám vaingloriously, he went  
 To meet him with a numerous retinue,  
 Slaves, purses, crown, and throne. At sight of him  
 Sikandar joyed, and all his foemen's words  
 Proved wind. The Sháh abode a year in Misr  
 To rest himself and troops.

There was a lady,  
 The queen of Andalús, and she was wise,  
 Ambitious, bounteous, with a countless host,  
 Famed and victorious through her own deserts,  
 And named Kaidáfa. From her warriors

She chose a cavalier, a clever draughtsman.  
 And said: "Go to Sikandar, naming not  
 This country and ourselves. mark everything  
 Minutely—his appearance, stature, court;  
 Then make a full length picture of him, showing  
 His favour, face, and bearing."

When he heard

He mounted, girt him to perform her bidding,  
 And went in courier-wise from Andalús  
 To Misr to eminent Sikandar Cæsar,  
 Observed him both upon the throne and saddle,  
 Brought paper out and implements of Chín,  
 And, having limned him to the life, returned  
 With all dispatch. Kaidáfa, when she saw  
 Sikandar's likeness, grieved, concealed her feelings  
 Sighed, and thus said: "By war and policy  
 This man will trample on the world, and brief  
 C. 1313 Will be their lives that come to fight with him!"  
 While for his part Sikandar asked Kabtún:—  
 "Who is Kaidáfa's peer on earth?"

"O king!"

He made reply, "she is unique. None knoweth  
 The number of her troops without at least  
 Much searching of the muster-roll. In treasure.  
 In matters courteous and of obligation,  
 In counsel and benevolence of speech,  
 Thou wilt behold not in the world her equal.  
 She hath a city that is built of stone;  
 A leopard could not wrest it from her grasp.  
 The ground it covereth is four leagues long,  
 And four leagues wide withal. If thou inquirest  
 About her treasure 'tis past measuring:  
 Her doings in the world are no new thing."

## § 18

*Sikandar's Letter to Kaidáfa, Queen of Andalus,  
and her Answer*

Sikandar, having heard that mindful man,  
Bade come a scribe. They wrote on silk a letter :—  
“ This from Sikandar, who o'erthroweth lions  
And taketh cities, unto wise Kaidáfa,  
Whose name is eminent in majesty.  
First, praise be to the Master of the sun,  
Who lighteth up the moon and turning sphere  
The Lord that meteth justice out aright,  
And granteth more than any one can ask. . . .  
We have not sought thy throne by violence,  
But have respected thine exalted state.  
When they deliver unto thee this letter,  
And light is thrown upon thy darkened counsels.  
Thou wilt dispatch what we impose as tribute  
As knowing that thou canst not strive with us.  
To act thus will be wise and provident :  
It will be strength in thee and true religion :  
Oppose and thou wilt see but change of fortune.  
Draw thy conclusions from Dára and Fúr :  
Thou needest go no further for instruction.”

Whenas the wind had dried the superscription  
They sealed the letter with a seal of musk.  
A cameleer sped to that famous queen  
Who marvelled at the letter as she read.  
In answer, first, she poured her praises forth  
“ To that just Judge, the Maker of the earth,  
Who raised the turning sky and set therein  
The seat of good and ill. He made thee victor  
O'er Fúr of Hind, Dára, and chiefs of Sind.  
Thy head hath been elated by success

Against those famous swordsmen : but dost thou  
 Rank me with them or think by conquering me  
 To wear my crown when I surpass them all  
 In Grace and greatness, troops and royal treasure ?  
 Shall I obey a Cæsar, fear his threats.  
 And quail ? A thousand thousand warriors  
 Are at my gate, and kings are in command  
 Of each contingent. Called I all my lieges  
 My land would not afford them room to camp.  
 While treasures wait my chiefs when they go forth  
 To war across our marches. What vain words  
 Thou speakest in thus crowing o'er Dárá !"  
 This 'neath her golden signet-ring she past,  
 Then sent a cameleer swift as a blast.

## § 19

*How Sikandar led his Troops to Andalus and took the  
 Hold of King Faryán*

Sikandar, having read the queen's reply,  
 Let blow the brazen trumpets and set forth.  
 When he had been one month upon the road  
 He reached the marches of Kaidáfa's realm.  
 Where reigned a monarch who was named Faryán,  
 Possessed of treasure, troops, and puissance.  
 He had a city well supplied with arms ;  
 No crane had seen the summit of its walls.  
 He gathered troops and garrisoned that hold,  
 And cavaliers patrolled the ramparts round.  
 Sikandar bade the bishops<sup>1</sup> bring their wains  
 And catapults, and in a sennight took  
 That lofty hold ; his noble army entered,  
 As did Sikandar who forbade all bloodshed.  
 One of Kaidáfa's sons, the son-in-law

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. v. p. 305 and *not.*

Of king Faryán who had much joy in him.  
 Was there within. To him Faryán had given  
 A favourite daughter, and his crown had been  
 Exalted by the queen. The son-in-law  
 Was named Kaidrúsh and he was all in all  
 To king Faryán for whom the sky decreed  
 Death in the fight; his daughter and her spouse  
 Were taken by the hands of one Shahrgír.

Sikandar, knowing who the spouse was, thought :—

“What cure is there for this contingency?”

Bade his wazír to come and gave to him  
 Authority and crown and throne. This sage

Was named Naitkún, a counsellor, a man

C. 1315

Of influence, to whom Sikandar said :—

“They will produce the wedded pair before thee.

And I will title thee Sikandar, son

Of Failakús. Assume the Kaian throne

And, when I come before thee girt for service,

Bid some fierce deathsman to behead Kaidrúsh.

Then I will come to thee and intercede,

Exhibiting the lowliest submission :

Make thou the audience private and, when I

Am waxing urgent, grant me my request.”

The minister was troubled, knowing not

What was the hidden purpose of the Sháh,

Who added : ‘We must keep this secret. Call me,

Like other envoys, talk much of Kaidáfa,

Send me right gladly with ten horse, and say :—

‘Go to, take this, and bring an answer quickly.’

Dispatch Kaidrúsh with me and hide all from him.

Naitkún said : “I will do so and will practise  
 Deception at thy bidding.”

When the sun

Had drawn its sword at dawn, and gloomy night

Had vanished in dismay, Naitkún assumed

The throne but ill at ease, ashamed, and sorry :

“ Preserved me and my consort from Sikandar,  
 Who else had given orders to behead me,  
 And burn my corpse in fire. Do what he wisheth  
 With right good will and thwart not his request.”

C. 1317

Now when Kaidáfa heard her son's account  
 Her heart was overset by that affliction.  
 She summoned from the palace to her presence  
 The envoy, placed him in the nobles' seat,  
 Gave him much greeting and a kindly welcome,  
 Assigned to him a splendid residence,  
 And sent all kinds of provand, robes, and carpets.  
 He tarried there that night and at the dawn  
 Went to the court to offer his respects.  
 The attendants raised the curtain and allowed him  
 To enter through the portal on his steed.  
 When he beheld Kaidáfa on her throne  
 Of ivory, crowned with a crown of gems  
 And turquoise, and arrayed in robes of Chín  
 Inwrought with gold, the attendance of her servants,  
 Her face bright as the sun, her throne supported  
 By crystal feet, and o'er her robe a net  
 Of onyx of Yaman on golden thread,  
 Impleached with many a gem, and slaves, with torques  
 And earrings, standing in that rosary<sup>1</sup>  
 All arabesqued with gold, he stood astound.  
 Oft times invoking to himself God's name.  
 To Cæsar, gazing on that court, Írán  
 And Rúm seemed even as nothing, and he kissed  
 The ground like other courtiers in her presence.  
 Kaidáfa gazed on him, received him well,  
 Much questioned him, and made him sit. Now when  
 Bright Sol set, and the audience-time for strangers  
 Had passed, she gave command to deck the palace  
 And call attendants, and for harp and wine.  
 They ranged in one hall tables made of teak

<sup>1</sup> /e. court.



With gold stars and designs in ivory,  
 Meats were provided past all reckoning,  
 Wine was brought forth and, when the eating ceased.  
 And gold and silver cups were handed round,  
 The company drank first Kaidāfa's health.  
 That noble queen gazed often at Sikandar  
 Amid the revel till at length she bade  
 The keeper of her treasures: "Bring to me  
 The lustrous silk with that delightful portrait,  
 Just as it is, and handle it with care."

He brought it to the queen, who scanned it much  
 And, having scrutinised Sikandar's face.  
 Found the presentment just, so that she knew:—  
 "'Tis Cesar, chief of yon famed army! He  
 Hath made himself his own ambassador.  
 And boldly reached this court. Imperious sir!'  
 She said to him, "come give Sikandar's message."

He thus replied: "The monarch of the world  
 Thus charged me in the presence of his nobles  
 To say to pure Kaidāfa: 'Here below  
 Ensue naught but the right. See that thou shun not  
 My bidding but observe shrewd fealty,  
 For if in aught thou art perverse in heart  
 I will lead forth a host heart-shattering,  
 Rob all thine army of the breath of life,  
 And give up all thy kingdom to the flames.  
 I had some intimation of thy virtues,  
 And therefore was not instant to assail thee  
 For thou possessest modesty and wisdom:  
 Thy shrewd rede is the world's security.  
 Thou knowest that if thou refusest tribute  
 Thou canst withstand me not: but thou shalt have  
 Naught that is not both fair and just if thou  
 Wilt turn from falsehood and from fraud.'"

Kaidāfa

Was wroth thereat but saw no salve but silence,

And said to him : " Return to thine abode,  
 And for the present rest there with thy friends.  
 To-morrow when thou comest we will answer,  
 And take fair order for thy homeward way."

Thereat Sikandar went back to his lodging,  
 And thought all night how to secure himself.  
 Now when the bright Lamp rose above the mountains  
 And plain and upland glittered like brocade,  
 He went to court again with smiling lips,  
 But heart o'ercast with care. The chamberlain  
 Saw, greeted him, and took him to the queen.  
 He saw a throng of strangers and a hall  
 Where was a crystal throne with patterns traced  
 In emeralds and cornelians, every boss  
 A royal gem. The dais was compact  
 Of sandal and lign-aloe, and the pillars  
 Of onyx and turquoise. The edifice,  
 The queen's Grace. throne, and puissance much amazed  
 him.

He cried : " This is indeed an audience-chamber !  
 God's worshippers behold not such another."

He paced toward her, and they set a seat  
 For him below the throne. Kaidáfa said :—  
 " Why marvel at our palace thus, Naitkún ?  
 Is Rúm indeed so other that thou needs  
 Must wonder at our land ? "

He said to her :—

" O queen ! misprize not thine own dwelling-place.  
 Thy head is higher than the heads of kings  
 Because thine ocean is a mine of gems."

Kaidáfa smiled : his speech and conduct charmed  
 her.

She then dismissed her court and, having seated  
 The envoy graciously before her, said :—

" O son of Failakús ! thou art a master  
 In fight and festival, in good and ill.

Thou hast approached me boldly to ask tribute,  
Although I know not what incited thee."

On hearing this Sikandar's favour changed :  
His soul was full of pain, his cheeks were livid.  
He said : "O most wise queen ' such words as these  
Become thee not. I thank the All-provider  
That none of all our famous chiefs are here  
To tell this to the master of the world,  
And take my life anon. Naitkun am I  
O mistress of the world ! so call me not  
The son of Failakús."

Kaidáfa said : --

"Dispute it not because thou art Sikandar.  
And, when thou seest the portrait of thyself,  
Cease to dissemble and display no wrath."

She brought and showed to him the silk all limned  
With that fair portrait and so vividly  
That, given motion, it had been himself.  
He bit his lips ; day grew for him like midnight.  
He said : ' Let no one be without a dagger  
Concealed about him ! "

If thou hadst one here  
Suspended from thy shoulder," she replied,  
' No strength or trenchant scimitar would serve.  
There is no room for fight or road for flight."

Sikandar said : ' The great are eager ever  
To win the world by valour, and must shun not  
The path of danger, for the faint of heart  
Excel not. Had I but my weapons now  
The whole house would become a sea of blood.  
And I, confronted by mine enemy,  
Would rend my liver's seat or slaughter thee ! "

## § 21

*How Kaidáfa counselled Sikandar,*

Kaidáfa, smiling at Sikandar's bearing,  
 His gallantry, and angry words, replied :—  
 "O monarch lion-like ! become not headstrong  
 In valour. It was not through Grace of thine  
 That Fúr of Hind, Dára son of Dáráb,  
 And all those warriors of Sind were slain,  
 But 'twas because those world-lords' day was over.  
 And thy star in the ascendant. Thine own valour  
 Hath made thee so presumptuous as to deem  
 Thyself the lord of time and earth, but know  
 That all our blessings are derived from God.  
 So while thou livest give the thanks to Him.  
 Thou said'st : 'The wisdom of the world is mine.'  
 I do not look upon thy words as true.  
 What profit hath thy wisdom been to thee  
 Since thou hast come within the Dragon's breath.  
 And, while still youthful, hemmest thine own shroud  
 By going as thine own ambassador ?  
 But bloodshed or a reckless strife with kings  
 Is not my wont. The ruler who is strong,  
 And justly generous, is wise withal,  
 For, know, the shedder of king's blood will see  
 But fire at last. Be easy, go rejoicing,  
 And in departing make a new departure,  
 For henceforth thou wilt do no embassies  
 Since all the earth will recognise Sikandar.  
 I know not any of the great whose portrait.  
 Limned thus on silk, is not in my possession.  
 And in a careful keeper's hands, and I  
 Have used the judgment of astrologers  
 Thereon to learn if I should trust or dread,  
 For when a prudent king hath been vouchsafed.  
 The age proclaimeth it to man and woman.

Thee will I call Naitkūn while thou art here,  
 And by that token seat thee at a distance  
 That none may know thy secret, hear thy name,  
 Or fame. I will dismiss thee with all kindness  
 But thou must be a master of discretion,  
 And, further, promise never more to be  
 A foe or ill-disposed toward my sons,  
 My kingdom or my kindred or allies.  
 And treat me as thy peer."

Sikandar heard

And joyed, relieved from fear and slaughter, swore  
 By that just Judge, who ruleth all, the Faith  
 Of Christ, and by the sword of war, and said :—  
 "So long as thy dominions, thine own sons,  
 And potentates allied to thee, endure  
 I will do naught but what is good and right :  
 I will not think of fraud or knavery."

When he had sworn Kaidāfa said to him :—  
 "I must not fail to warn thee of one thing :  
 Know this then that Tainúsh my son misprizeth  
 My knowledge and my counsel. He is wayward,  
 Fúr's son-in-law, and must not hear from near  
 Or far that thou art one skin with Sikandar,  
 Or friend withal, for he would fain avenge  
 Fúr and in battle dash down heaven to earth.  
 Return now to thy house in peace and joy  
 And utter naught about the world's concerns."

Sikandar went, his heart was big within him,  
 For wise men think of death with seriousness.  
 Kaidāfa brought no frown upon his face,  
 And never disregarded he her counsel.  
 He stayed that night and early in the morn  
 Went from his lodging and approached the queen,  
 Who sat within the hall of audience,  
 Surrounded by a crowd of warriors.<sup>1</sup>

C. 1321

<sup>1</sup> "toute parée et entourée de bouquets de fleurs" (Mohl).

The ceiling was of ivory and gold,  
 And in the gold were divers jewels set.  
 In front of all the musky-scented throng  
 Before the queen there stood two proper sons :  
 One was Tainúsh, the cavalier, the other  
 Kaidrúsh who used to hearken to her words.  
 The younger son spake to his mother thus :—  
 “ O queen well favoured of the stars and just !  
 Take order that Naitkún glad, well content,  
 And with a guide, may leave thee, so that none  
 May harm or treat him as a foe, forwhy  
 He saved my life, and as bright life I hold him.”

She said : “ Mine actions shall increase his greatness.”

Then to Sikandar spake that noble queen :—  
 “ Now make the secret patent to us. What  
 Hast thou to say ? What is Sikandar’s purpose ?  
 What knowest thou about the Sháh, and whom  
 Hath he for minister ?”

Sikandar answered :—

“ Great lady ! I have tarried long. The Sháh  
 Said : ‘ Go, ask tribute from her land. If thou  
 Delayest I will lead the army thither.  
 And leave her not the kingdom, crown, and throne.  
 Grace, queenship, might, or fortune for her own.’ ”

## § 22

*How Tainúsh, the Son of Kaidrúsh, was wroth with Sikandar,  
 and how Sikandar took Precaution against him*

Tainúsh, when he had heard Sikandar’s words,  
 Raged like a blast, and said : “ Thou worthless fool !  
 No man could reckon thee a man at all !

Know'st not before whose presence thou art seated ?  
 Assume the bond slave's pose !<sup>1</sup> Thy head is full  
 Of wrath and arrogance. Inform me who  
 Thy monarch is. Save for our sovereign's Grace  
 I would pluck off thy head as I would pluck  
 An orange from its bough. This very night,  
 Because I grieve for Fúr, will I display  
 Thy trunkless head in presence of the host !"

His mother called to him, for his hot head  
 Was growing more distraught, and said : " The words  
 Are not his own ! Address the envoy's sender,  
 Whose utterance they are."

She bade : " Conduct C. 1322  
 Tainúsh outside the court. Thou scowling one !"  
 She added, " show not thy vile temper here.  
 He saved Kaidrúsh, thy brother, from the Sháh,  
 And reached our court, and yet thou raillest thus  
 Against him and art wroth and sore displeased !"

The son went forth fulfilled with rage and dudgeon  
 With bloodshot eyes. In private to Sikandar  
 She said : " Tainúsh is foolish and the tool  
 Of dís. In private he must not devise  
 Some loss or crime. Thou seekest after knowledge,  
 And thou art wise. Consider what to do."

Sikandar said : " So be it then. Thy course  
 Is to recall Tainúsh."

Thereat the queen  
 Sent for her son and set him 'neath the throne.  
 Sikandar said : " Imperious prince ! if thou  
 Wouldst have thy wish command thyself, and I  
 Will not oppose thee. I accept each word  
 Of thine. Sikandar, who is Sháh and hath  
 The throne and crown, hath plunged me into gloom.

<sup>1</sup> Literally "Sit not before the queen. Show not thy hands," the proper attitude for slaves being to stand with folded arms, with the hands under the arm-pits. In this position they cannot do mischief.

He sent me to the queen with this command :—  
 ‘ Ask tribute from that famous sovereign,’  
 So that whatever ill grow manifest  
 From foes toward him may come on me. Hear, prince  
 Rage not nor storm—another’s due—at me,  
 For much have I been wronged by him myself.  
 And I have schemed to slay him. To thy hands  
 Will I deliver him, and then the world  
 Will be well quit, and I fare free, of him.  
 Thou know’st not yet my plan and what good thoughts  
 I harbour. I will go to him to-day  
 With my reply and will advise him finely !  
 If I shall grasp his hand and from his camp  
 Conduct him to thee, and in such a fashion  
 That he shall have no troops with him, and thou  
 Shalt look not on his scimitar, his throne,  
 And crown, then what wilt thou bestow upon me  
 Of all the realm, how recognise my service ? ”

Tainúsh thereat made answer : “ I have heard  
 Thy words, and we must act thereon forthwith,  
 For if thou shalt achieve this, and wilt do  
 Thine utmost honestly, I will bestow  
 His treasures and his purses, steeds, and men—  
 Devoted lieges—and my thanks upon thee :  
 Thou shalt possess the world, know good, become  
 My loyal minister, and in this land  
 My treasurer.”

C. 1323

Sikandar rose and shook  
 Hands on the bargain, and Tainúsh inquired :—  
 “ How wilt thou compass this and by what spell  
 Effect this sorcery ? ”

Sikandar said :—  
 ‘ Thou must go with me, when I quit the queen,  
 And take a thousand horsemen of thy host,  
 All famed in fight. Upon my journey hither  
 I marked a wood where I will put in ambush



Thee and thy soldiery, and go myself  
 To him, will look on that malignant soul.  
 And say: "The queen hath sent so much that thou  
 Ne'er wilt want more. Her elder son, Tainúsh  
 By name, hath brought the Shah her salutations  
 And messages, but saith: "I dare not face him  
 Amidst his host." Now if my lord would deign  
 Escorted only by his priests and sages,  
 To meet Tainúsh then in that interview  
 He could receive the goods and hoarded treasures  
 Of all sorts, for Tainúsh would come, on seeing thee  
 Without thy host, or else be free to go.  
 Sikandar when he heareth my smooth words,  
 Will never guess my colour and design.  
 But seek the shade beneath those trees, requiring  
 From thee those crowns and thrones. Do thou sur-  
 round him

With thy fierce troops and make the future certain:  
 This will achieve my vengeance and thy wishes.  
 And thy fame soar by favour of the stars.  
 When thou hast taken him I am all thine.  
 And, when thou biddest I will be thy watchman.  
 Then mine affairs will prosper and my market  
 Grow hot and brisk, for thou shalt carry off  
 Much wealth and slaves and steeds caparisoned."

Tainúsh rejoiced on hearing him appeared  
 A noble cypress-tree, and answered thus:—

My hope is that his day may turn to night,  
 And that he may be taken unawares  
 Within my toils, for all the bloodshed made  
 By him within the world—that of Dárá.  
 Son of Dáráb, the warriors of Sind,  
 And that great man of Hind, the valiant Fúr."

Now when Kaidáfa heard Sikandar's words  
 And marked and understood his stratagem.  
 She smiled at his device behind her lips,

And hid those corals underneath her veil.

Sikandar left her presence in a mood  
O'ershadowed by his great solicitude.

### § 23

*How Sikandar made a Compact with Kaidáfa and  
returned to his Troops*

C. 1324 That livelong night Sikandar laid his plans  
And, when the sun displayed its fringe of Chín.  
And set its golden banner o'er the heights,  
While sank night's silken robe of violet.  
He visited the queen and asked for audience  
From her attendants. As their custom was  
They caused him to alight, and then that seeker  
Of world-dominion paced before the queen.  
They cleared the hall and hastened to present  
The envoy. When he saw Kaidáfa throned  
He said : "May Jupiter espouse thy counsels !  
By Christianity, the law of right,  
By God who witnesseth to what I say.  
By the religion of the mighty Cross,  
By a brave monarch's life and head, priest's girdle  
And Holy Ghost,<sup>1</sup> I promise that henceforth  
The soil of Andalus shall not behold me.  
Nor will I send a host to battle thither.  
I will employ no colourable ruse,  
I will entreat not ill thy stainless son  
By act or hest of mine, but bind true faith  
To thee upon my soul and no wise seek  
Thine injury. Thy friend shall be my brother  
Thy throne as sacred to me as the Cross."

Kaidáfa marked his oath, his singleness  
Of heart, and honest pledge. She had the palace

<sup>1</sup> Or the angel Gabriel may be intended.

Filled with gold seats. and set forth gauds of Chin,  
 Called for her nobles and the well-starred chiefs,  
 Set them, each one, upon a seat of gold  
 And, having sent for both her well-loved sons  
 And for her kith and kin, harangued them thus :—  
 ‘ It is not well that we be over-troubled  
 Within this Wayside Inn, and changeful fortune  
 Must make not battle and revenge my lot.  
 Sikandar still will be insatiate  
 Of treasure though he over-top the sky,  
 And for that reason seeketh war with us  
 Though all earth’s treasures are not worth the toil.  
 I purpose that we do not fight with him :  
 I will not bring distress upon the realm :  
 But we will make a politic response,  
 At once exalting and exhorting him.  
 If after mine advice he seeketh war,  
 Ignoring both my Glory and my throne,  
 I with the host will face him so that sun  
 And moon shall pity him. Still what we try  
 Will do no harm, and peace may be preserved.  
 What say ye ? What respond ? Advise me well.”

C. 1325

The chiefs all raised their heads and answered her :—  
 “ O queen of counsel and of justice ! none  
 Can call to mind a chief like thee, and thou  
 Speak’st naught but good. Oh ! fair befall the land  
 That hath a chief like thee ! If this great Sháh  
 Become thy friend, what more can good men wish ?  
 The Sháh will not attack thee for thy wealth :  
 To vex thee would cost more than all thy treasures.  
 When a Sikandar cometh out of Rûm,  
 Converting earth to ocean with his sword.  
 And then departeth from thy gates with gifts,  
 The fact outvalueth the whole world’s havings.  
 We cannot favour any course but peace,  
 For he is foolish that desireth war.”

When she had heard the words of those wise men.  
 Of those approved and holy-hearted priests,  
 She oped her treasures and took out the crown  
 Worn by her sire, with bracelet and gold torque  
 (It was a crown the value of whose gems  
 None in the city or the country knew),  
 And to the messenger she said: "This crown  
 Is priceless: those that others have are naught  
 And, seeing that Sikandar hath deserved  
 This crown of chiefs, I have adopted him  
 As son adult."

Now she possessed a throne  
 That was compact of seventy parts and more:  
 Well gifted he that could dismember it!  
 The pattern was of intricate design,  
 And every juncture fitted curiously;  
 The feet had terminals of dragons' heads.  
 None knew its jewels' worth, but it comprised  
 Four hundred royal gems, an equal sum  
 Of brilliant rubies, two whereof in hue  
 Pomegranate-grain, weighed one miskál apiece,  
 And emeralds four hundred, several stones.  
 Bright as a rainbow, and uncut. She added  
 Of raiment more than forty camel-loads:  
 The lady's heart was bounteous as the sea.  
 There were five hundred tusks of elephants;  
 What tusks they were! Their total length reached  
 miles!

There were four hundred leopard-skins and more,  
 The sort brought from Barbar: of dappled deer-skins  
 A thousand plain or dyed, all fair to see,  
 Besides a hundred hounds keen in the chase,  
 Which sped like arrows over hill and plain.  
 Kaidáfa's servants then led forth before her  
 Two hundred buffaloes: there were withal  
 Four hundred seats upholstered in brocade

And silken stuffs, the frames of ebony,  
 And of fresh aloe-wood four hundred more C. 1326  
 With sunbeams saturate and golden hue.  
 She ordered too a thousand Indian swords  
 With daggers and with coats of battle-mail,  
 While from the plain they brought a hundred steeds,  
 High-bred and harnessed, with the other wealth,  
 Besides twelve hundred casques and morions.  
 She bade her treasurer: "Now, tarry not,  
 Account for all these to Naitkún, and say:—  
 'Be ready to depart at dawn to-morrow.'"

Whenas the morning showed its flag on high,  
 When heaven's violet face grew camphor-like,  
 When earth was fresh and height like sandarac  
 A sound of drums rose from the palace-gate.  
 Sikandar, having leave to go, bestrode  
 His steed and, when the brave Tainúsh had bidden  
 The troops to mount, proceeded from his palace  
 To court, and to Kaidáfa said: "Farewell,  
 And, while the world shall last, may it and thou  
 Be woof and warp."

They journeyed stage by stage  
 Until they drew anear the scene of action—  
 The camp of that famed Sháh the fortune-favoured  
 Sikandar, who left baggage in the forest.  
 Where there were streams and many trees, and told  
 Tainúsh: "Here rest and, rested, take the cup  
 In hand. I will depart, make good my words,  
 And do all for the best."

Sikandar reached  
 The encampment. All the host came forth and showed  
 Their gladness by their shouts, while making ready  
 The Kaian crown, because they had despaired  
 Of their aspiring lord. Who ever thought  
 To see his face again? With tongues all praise  
 The soldiers bent their faces to the ground.

Sikandar then selected from the host  
 A thousand of the Rúman men of name,  
 Who, warriors as they were intent on strife,  
 With ox-head maces and in coats of mail,  
 Set forward and begirt the wood about—  
 A line of men and weapons. Then he cried:—

Rash man! art thou resolved on fight or flight?"<sup>1</sup>

Repenting of his plots and cleverness  
 Tainúsh quaked and exclaimed: "High-minded Shah!  
 Thou shouldst choose rather to be praised than blamed.  
 This was not thine agreement with my mother.  
 Didst thou not say: 'I will not quit the right'?  
 Display, as in the instance of Kaidrúsh,  
 True greatness and endeavour righteousness."

Sikandar said: "O prince! why hast thou grown  
 So feeble in this weighty enterprise?"

C. 1327

But have no fears for thou art safe with me.  
 I will not harm one of thy kin or shun  
 Kaidáfa's bidding I! 'Tis ill for kings  
 To break their faith."

Tainúsh forthwith alighted.  
 And kissed the ground, displaying deep abasement.  
 The world-lord grasped his hand and reaffirmed  
 The former covenant, and said withal:—  
 'Be of good cheer and harbour no suspicions.  
 I feel no hate toward thee. When thy mother  
 Sat on her throne of gold, and when I clasped  
 Thy hand in mine, I told thee: 'I will lay  
 The king of earth's hand thus within thine own.'  
 This very day my promise is performed,  
 For hasty speeches come not well from Sháhs.  
 I am the same Sikandar that held forth  
 So pleasantly to thee. Kaidáfa knew  
 That very day that thou didst grasp his hand."

Then Cæsar bade the attendants: "Set a throne

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Beneath a blossom-scattering tree."

He bade

To spread the board and call for wine and harpers.

They spent a while in pleasure and delights.

Now when the ruddy wine had made them glad

The Sháh gave orders for a royal gift

Of stuffs of Rúm, of Chín, and Persian make.

And gave it to Tainúsh with gold and silver

For his companions, crowns and belts withal

To those that merited, and thus enjoined him :—

' Stay not, this wood is distant, not thy home.

Say to Kaidáfa: ' O thou prudent lady,

Thou ruler shrewd of heart and well advised '

While life endureth I will constant be,

And have possessed my soul with love for thee.' "

#### § 24

*How Sikandar went to the Country of the Brahmins, inquired  
into their Mysteries, and received an Answer*

He marched thence to the country of the Brahmins

To make inquiry of their ancient rites

From those abstemious men. The Brahmins heard

News of the Sháh that he was marching thither.

And from the heights came down those devotees,

Assembling at the tidings. Then the sages

Wrote to Sikandar, chief of priests. The letter

Began with heart-felt blessings from the Lord

Of all upon the monarch of the world :—

" May the Sháh ever conquer, wax, and have

Both mastery, and knowledge." then proceeded :—

" God hath bestowed on thee the mighty world,

Brave king! What wouldst thou in our meagre land

The dwelling of God's worshippers? If thou

Dost come for wealth, good sooth! thy wits are failing!

C. 1328

It is our part to suffer and be wise ;  
 Yea, knowledge maketh musical our souls.  
 Thou canst not rob us of long-suffering,  
 While knowledge harmeth none. Thou wilt but see  
 A naked flock dispersed by wind and snow,  
 And fain eat grass-seed if thou tarriest !”

The envoy, girt with roots of grass, approached  
 The Sháh who, having seen him and the letter,  
 Resolved to act aright and do no hurt.  
 He halted all his host and then proceeded  
 Himself with the philosophers of Rúm.  
 Informed thereof the devotees all came  
 To meet him on his way with paltry gifts,  
 Because they had no treasure, tilth, or crops.  
 And blessed that noble monarch of the earth.  
 Sikandar marked the Brahmans' looks and talk.  
 How they went bare of body, foot, and head,  
 Their bodies barren while their souls bare knowledge,  
 With grass for raiment and its seeds for food,  
 At ease from feast and battle-day, and how  
 They ate, reposed, and slept on plain and mountain,  
 And gathered everywhere in naked troops :  
 Their provand all of tree-fruits and the seeds  
 Of grasses on the mountain-tops, their girdles  
 The pelts of game, their raiment ready-made.<sup>1</sup>  
 He asked them of their ways of sleep and provand,  
 Rest and good days and fight : “ What share have ye  
 Of this world's good ? Hath Heaven no antidote  
 For bane save this alone ? ”

A sage replied :—

“ O conqueror of the world ! none of us talketh  
 Of war and strife : we need not clothes, stuffs, foods.  
 Man being born in mother-nakedness  
 Should not be dainty in his garniture.  
 And hence returneth naked to the dust.

<sup>1</sup> In the sense explained below.



Where all is fear, anxiety, and dread.  
 Earth coucheth and heaven clotheth us : our eyes.  
 Expectant of the ending, watch the way.  
 How much the ambitious striveth after things  
 Which, strife and all, are hardly worth a doit.  
 For when he goeth from this Wayside Inn  
 Behind are left his gold and crown and treasure :  
 But, know, his virtues bear him company  
 While both his head and state descend to dust."

C. 1329

Sikandar asked of them : " Which number most—  
 The hidden or the manifest, to wit  
 The living or the dead whose needs are over ? "

The sage replied : " Know, king ! the hidden far  
 Exceed the manifest, for thou mayst reckon  
 Upon a hundred thousand dead and more  
 For each alive, and blest is one not outcast  
 In Hell. The living too must die. One goeth,  
 And leaveth his position to another."

The Sháh inquired : " Is there most land or water  
 Illumined by the sun ? "

The Brahman answered :—

" The water is the keeper of the land."

He asked : " Who are the awakened, who the sinners  
 On earth ? They make a stir, and many live  
 Not knowing wherefore they are here at all ! "

The Brahman answered : " Know thou pure in heart  
 And justice-seeking chief ! the awakened man  
 Is he whom little of this world sufficeth :  
 The guiltiest one whose wisdom hath been docked  
 By hate and greed. If thou wouldst know such well  
 Look first upon thyself, for all earth's face  
 Is thine, and one would say that restless heaven  
 Is kin to thee, yet still thou schem'st for more,  
 And to withhold thy wits from grimy dust,  
 For greed is thy soul's hell, and it may be  
 That these our words may cause thee to repent."

The Sháh inquired: "What is our ruling passion,  
And our companion everywhere for evil?"

The Brahman answered: "Greed—the sum of hate,  
And soul of sin."

"What is its nature then,"

The Sháh asked, "seeing there is cause to weep  
O'er this its passion for aggrandisement?"

The Brahman made this answer: "Greed and Need  
Are two dívs and long-drawn calamities.  
One hath its lips dried up with poverty,  
The other sleepeth not to compass more,  
While both are hunted by the evil day:  
How blest is he whose soul is fed on wisdom!"

Now, when Sikandar heard, his face resembled  
The bloom of fenugreek, his cheeks were pale,  
Tears filled his eyes, his smiling countenance  
Was drawn with frowns. The imperious Sháh in-  
quired:—

C. 1330 "What would ye have of us? I will not grudge you  
My treasures, nor regret what they have cost me."

One said: "Exalted Sháh! deliver us  
From eld and death."

"Death is inexorable,"

The Sháh made answer. "How canst thou escape  
That Dragon's piercing clutch? For wert thou iron  
Thou wouldst not find release, while youth, if here  
It tarrieth, is not exempt from eld."

The Brahman said to him: "O mighty Sháh,  
The world-lord, sage, and one whose word is law!  
Thou knowest death to be remediless,  
And that there is no worse calamity

- Than eld. Why seek to win the world by toil,  
Why in thy madness sniff the bloom of bale?  
Thou wilt but leave the product of thy travail
- Behind thee and bestow what thou hast toiled for,  
And treasures, on the foe. To undertake

To toil for others is both ignorance  
And folly. White hair is Death's messenger :  
Why hope so much to live ?”

The shrewd Sháh said :—

“If any of God's servants could escape  
From His decree, I had escaped withal  
By observation of the turning sky :  
But neither man of lore nor warrior  
Evadeth that decree, strive how he may.  
Moreover they that perished in my wars.  
Or had their days cut short by destiny  
Deserved their fate by bloodshed and ill deeds.  
For no oppressor 'scapeth. They have suffered  
God's chastisement for quitting wisdom's way.  
'Tis not in man to limit heaven's powers,  
Or shun the process of the passing hours.’

## § 25

*How Sikandar came to the Western Sea and saw Wonders*

Sikandar proffered many a gift, but none  
Accepted them : the Brahmans had small greed.  
He did no hurt, set off upon his march,  
By that same token fared toward the West,  
And from the Brahmans' country reached a spot  
Whence he beheld a deep and boundless sea :  
The men there had their faces veiled like women,  
And went arrayed, all colour and perfume.  
They spake not Persian, whether old or modern,  
Or Arabic, or Turkman, or Chinese :  
They lived on fish alone : there was no means  
Of bringing aught by road. Sikandar stood  
Astound at them and in the Rúman tongue  
Invoked God's name. Then from the water rose  
A rock as bright and yellow as the sun.

The Sháh desired a swift ship whence to view  
The thing aright. Of his philosophers  
One said : " 'Tis not for thee to cross the Deep :  
Wait till some man of lore survey the rock."

Then thirty men, some Persian and some Rúman.  
Embarked. That bit of rock turned out to be  
A yellow fish which, as they came anigh,  
Drew down the vessel swiftly, dived, and vanished !  
Sikandar's soldiers were aghast, and all  
Invoked God's name. A priest said to the Sháh :—  
" A goodly thing is knowledge, for the man  
That hath it is in this world chief of folk.  
Now if the Sháh had gone and perished thus  
Blood would have filled the souls of this great host."

Departing thence he led the army on  
To where a novel water came in view.  
Around it there were reeds as large as trees :  
Thou wouldst have said : " They are the mighty stems  
Of planes." They were above ten cubits thick,  
And measured forty cubits in their height.  
The houses were of reeds and built thereon.  
They might not tarry in that reed-bed : no one  
Drank of its water for 'twas salt. Sikandar  
Fared thence until a deepsome lake appeared ;  
The world was jocund. water honey-like ;  
The soil exhaled the scent of musk. They ate,  
And set themselves to sleep, when from the water  
Came writhing snakes in swarms while from the wood  
Flame-coloured scorpions issued, and the world  
Grew black and straitened to those slumberers.  
On every side there perished multitudes.  
Men great in lore and war. On one side came  
Herds of wild boars with long tusks diamond-bright,  
And on the other lions that out-bulked  
An ox : none could withstand them ; so the host.  
Withdrawing from the mere and flinging fire

Upon that reed-bed. set themselves to slay  
Hogs in such numbers as to block the way.

## § 26

*How Sikandar reached the Land of Habash, fought, and  
was victorious*

Departing thence the sun-like Shāh in haste C. 1332  
Came to the country of Habash and saw  
A land as 'twere a raven's plume with men  
Black-faced with eyes like lamps. A lusty crowd  
Of able-bodied folk, large-limbed and naked,  
Raised, when they saw afar the army's dust.  
Their war-cry to the clouds. A thousand thousand  
Assembled. All turned black before the Shāh.  
They came on him and slaughtered many troops  
Transfixing them with bones instead of spears.  
He bade his soldiers arm. Those lion-men  
Discomfited the blacks, who charged unclad  
And slew above a thousand while the rest  
Turned from the fray. Earth's face seemed like the sea  
Of Chín with bloodshed. When the dales and deserts  
Were smirched with gore, and slain piled everywhere,  
The soldiers scattered fuel on the heaps.  
And then Sikandar bade to kindle them.  
When it was dark the wolves began to howl:  
Sikandar donned his helmet and cuirass.  
A pack approached, all big as buffaloes.  
Their leader, larger than an elephant  
Had on its head a dusky horn. It slew  
Full many a chief and oft attacked, ne'er showed  
Its back. With arrows they made shift to kill  
At last that elephant-taking iron Hill.

## § 27

*How Sikandar reached the Land of the Narmpái, how he fought  
and was victorious, how he slew a Dragon, ascended a  
Mountain, and was forewarned of his own Death*

Thence marched he quickly and invoking oft  
The just World-lord. On reaching the Narmpái  
He saw a countless folk who had no steeds.

C. 1333

Or breastplate, sword, or mace, and every one  
Was lion-like in form. Now when the host  
Neared the Narmpái the world grew black to them ;  
They roared like rattling thunder, came like dýs  
Upon Sikandar, running on their knees,  
With martial bodies and contentious hearts.  
And showered stones fiercely as the autumn-blasts  
Beat on the trees. The Rúman host advanced  
With sword and arrow, and thou wouldst have said :—  
“ Bright day is dimmed.”

When few Narmpái were left  
Sikandar rested, then led on the host,  
And reached what seemed a boundless city whence  
All, as their wont was, went to meet him gladly,  
Asked naught but brought all kinds of tapestries.  
Of raiment and of provand while Sikandar  
Saluted, well received, and honoured them  
According to their station. Then he bade  
The common folk, the chiefs, and those star-favoured  
To carpet all the plain. The sands and soil  
Were tricked out with brocade. Upon the waste  
They pitched the Sháh's pavilion, and the brave  
Took post around. All revelled, Sháh and horsemen.  
Thus, as he fleeted time with feast and wine,  
Or rest, the host, inured to heat and cold,  
Reposed from war. Thereafter ceaselessly  
He sought a lucky day whereon to march

Sought for intelligence from all, but none  
 Gave him auspicious counsel. He observed  
 A mountain with its summit midst the stars :  
 Thou wouldst have said : " It will arrest the sky " "  
 Few were the folk thereon, and none of them  
 Remained at night. Of these he asked : " What way  
 Is there, and how must I conduct the host ? "

All blessed him, saying : " Famous king of earth !  
 " The way is o'er the mount if guide could go,  
 But on its farther side there is a dragon,  
 Whose grievous venom doth confound the wolf.  
 Thy troops can pass it not : its venom's fumes  
 Mount to the moon : flames issue from its maw,  
 And its two side-locks would avail to snare  
 An elephant. Our folk can not withstand it.  
 It needeth for its food five oxen nightly.  
 We buy, and drive, them on yon rocky mount,  
 Drive them with care and trouble, lest the dragon  
 Come hither, and our folk in numbers sutter."

C. 1334

Sikandar, at the dragon's feeding-time,  
 Chose troops and bade to give it naught that day.  
 The dragon, when its hour for battenning  
 Was o'er, came down the pass like fire. Sikandar  
 Bade his troops shower thereon their arrows swiftly.  
 That laidly dragon drew one breath and sucked  
 Some warriors in. The son of Failakús  
 Bade beat the tymbals and the kettledrums,  
 Enkindle mighty fires and make a blaze  
 In every quarter. When the mountain rang  
 With tymbal-din the monster feared and fled.

When Sol ascended from the Sign of Taurus.  
 And soared the lark's note from the garths of roses  
 The warrior-chieftain brought with him five oxen,  
 Procured with money from his treasury.  
 He slew and skinned them, heads and all : his scheme  
 Gave courage to his friends. He charged the hides

With bane and naphtha, and made speed toward  
 The dragon. Blowing up the skins he called  
 Upon the Giver of all good and bade  
 Men pass the hides along from hand to hand.  
 As he drew near the dragon it appeared  
 Black like a cloud, its tongue was livid, its eyes  
 Seemed blood, its maw belched flame. They cast the  
 oxen

Down from the mountain-top and closely marked  
 The dragon, which engorged them, swift as wind,  
 Or ever they had left those warriors' hands.  
 Now when its frame was hide-stuffed, and the bane  
 Had spread throughout its body, it pierced through  
 The entrails and invaded brains and feet.  
 The dragon dashed its head on mount and rocks.  
 And thus a long time lapsed while all the troops  
 Showered arrows on it till that mountain-form,  
 That hunter, fell. Thence fared the host with speed,  
 And left in scorn the dragon's body there.

Sikandar led them to another mountain.

One that amazed the troops. The keen of sight  
 Could mark its height from far and that its peak  
 Was like a scimitar-blade and thereupon.  
 Apart from folk and distant from the throng,  
 Was set a golden throne. A hoary corpse  
 Was on it verily still full of grace  
 In death, palled in brocade, upon its head  
 A crown of gems of all kinds, and heaped round  
 With gold and silver. None could pass that way,  
 For all that scaled the mountain-top to seek  
 Aught of that corpse began to quake though fearless.  
 Died, and returned to dust. Sikandar clomb  
 The mountain-top to view the corpse with all  
 Its gold and silver but he heard a voice:—  
 "O Sháh! thou hast accomplished thy career,  
 Hast voided many a monarch's throne, exalted



Thy head to heaven, and slaughtered many a foe  
And friend. 'Tis time for thee to quit the world."

Burned like a lamp the Shāh's cheeks as he heard:  
He left that mount and with a heart all seared.

### § 28

*How Sikandar reached the City of Women, named  
Harūm, and saw Wonders there*

On marching with his chiefs of Rūm Sikandar  
Fared toward the city that thou call'st Harūm,  
Which was inhabited by women only.  
Who suffered none to come within their gates.  
Their left breasts were like eager warriors'.  
Who don the breastplate on the day of battle.  
While on the right hand they resembled women's,—  
Pomegranate-like on silk. The Shāh with all  
His mighty men of Rūm approached Harūm.  
And wrote a letter fit and fair and worthy  
Of his high birth, addressed thus: "From the king  
Of Rūm and of Írán to her that is  
The ruler in Harūm.

The letter first

Named Him who ruleth o'er the starry heaven.  
Of whom are justice, love, and bounteousness,  
And then went on: "Whoe'er is wise of soul,  
And walketh yet alive upon the world  
Hath heard of what we have achieved on earth,  
And how we have exalted sovereignty.  
While he that hath refused to do our bidding  
Hath no couch save dark dust. Fain would I have  
No place concealed from me throughout the world.  
I roam not for addition's sake but ache  
For knowledge. Be my hand withheld from gain,  
And justice ever comrade of my soul.

C. 1336 If I approach 'tis not to fight with you ;  
 My heart is set on peace and jollity.  
 If ye have any sage wise, shrewd, and clerkly.  
 When he hath read my letter of advice  
 Let all of you of worth prepare to meet me,  
 For none shall lose by coming."

He commanded

That a philosopher of Rúm should bear  
 The letter to the city of Harúm.  
 And added many honied words. The envoy  
 Was wise himself. When he arrived he saw  
 The city full of women and no men,  
 And all the people went forth to the plain  
 To see the Rúman. All the counsellors  
 In that assembly gathered round the letter  
 And, when a city-sage had read it over,  
 And grew possessed of what the Sháh proposed,  
 They sat, and wrote back : " O exalted Sháh !  
 Live ever. We have set thy messenger  
 Before us and have read thy letter through.  
 First as to what thou sayest touching kings.  
 Thy victories, and former fights : if thou  
 Shalt march against the city of Harúm  
 Thou wilt not see the ground for hoofs and feet  
 The districts of our city pass compute,  
 And in each one there are ten thousand women.  
 We sleep in arms and battle for addition.  
 We all are spouseless, modest maidens we.  
 Whichever way thou comest to this land  
 There is deep water to be ferried over.  
 When one among us hath a mind to wed  
 We none of us behold her face again,  
 And she must cross the water be the day  
 Fine, blustering, or snowy. Having married,  
 If she shall have a daughter—one refined  
 And fond of hues and scents—that child of hers

Abideth ever in her native air :  
 But if she proveth masculine and proud  
 Her mother will dispatch her to Harûm :  
 While if the mother bringeth forth a son  
 He tarrieth, coming not to dwell with us.  
 Each night ten thousand maidens guard the river.  
 When one of us unhorseth in the fight  
 Some lion-man we set a golden crown  
 Upon her head and raise o'er Gemini  
 Her throne, and surely there are thirty thousand  
 Among us, wearing crown of gold and earrings  
 By whose hands some illustrious warrior  
 Hath turned to dust upon the day of battle.  
 Thou art a great man, and thy fame is high : C. 1337  
 Close not the door thereof upon thyself.  
 Else folk will say that thou didst fight with women.  
 And, after fighting, fled'st, and this will shame thee  
 And ne'er be obsolete while this world lasteth ;  
 But if thou, with thy famous men of Rûm,  
 Wilt come and go about Harûm, observing  
 All faith and courtesy, thou shalt behold  
 But mirth and kindness. If thy choice, O Shâh !  
 Be other thou wilt shrink from us in battle.  
 We will lead forth against thee such a host  
 That sun and moon shall darken."

When this answer

Was finished an ambassadress departed  
 With crown and royal raiment, and with ten  
 Fair cavaliers. When she approached the Shâh  
 In state he sent some troops to welcome her.  
 The noble lady gave to him the letter.  
 And told the message of the valiant women.  
 Sikandar, having read that answer, chose  
 A man discreet and wise, sent this reply.  
 And said : " Be wisdom wedded to men's brains.  
 No kings or chiefs, exalted though they be

And favoured by the stars, are left on earth  
 That are not subject unto me. Black dust  
 And camphor-dust, and feast and battlefield,  
 Are one to me. I have not come with drums,  
 With elephants, with players on the tymbals,  
 And such a host that plain and mountain quake  
 Beneath the horses' hoofs, to fight with women.  
 I fain would see your city, and if ye  
 Will make approaches to me all is well.  
 When I have seen I will march hence the host.  
 And not abide here long. We will behold  
 Your policy and glory, how ye manage  
 Your steeds, your grace, and potency. Privily  
 Will I inquire as to your works and ways,  
 How women can exist, men absent, how  
 Death's ravage is repaired, and find the outcome."

The envoy went and did his embassy  
 At large. The magnates met and made reply :—  
 We will select two thousand women, fluent,  
 Learned, and discreet; each hundred have in charge  
 Ten crowns of gold each set with many gems,  
 Two hundred crowns in all, and none but kings  
 Are digne of them. We will collect and heap them,  
 Each with its jewels weighing thirty ratl.<sup>1</sup>  
 We will go forth to meet the Sháh when we  
 Are ware of his approach, for we have heard  
 About his knowledge and his Grace."

The envoy  
 Returned and spake those words instinct with wisdom.  
 Sikandar marched forth from his resting-place.  
 And marvelled at the conduct of those women.  
 He went two stages, then a storm arose,  
 Whose snow-drifts made all level with the hills,  
 And many followers perished on that day  
 Through cold and snow. The Sháh pursued his march

<sup>1</sup> A ratl now = 1'014 lb. av. P. reads "three" for "thirty."

Two stages farther through that grievous frost,  
Then reached a burning land whence vapours rose.  
And murky clouds; "The host." thou wouldst have said.  
"Was marching over fire." The hauberks burnt  
The shoulders of the Persians, and the earth  
Glowed with the horse-shoes of the cavaliers.  
And thus it was until they reached a land  
Where they beheld all folk as black as night,  
With pendent, slobbering lips; all lips and slobber  
Were they, all slobber and lip! Their eyes seemed  
blood:

Flames issued from their mouths! Their warriors  
Brought many elephants and offerings  
Before the Shāh, and said: "We caused this storm  
And snow to harm you, for none e'er hath traversed  
This route as we have seen your army do."

The Shāh abode a month. When he and host  
Had been refreshed he sped thence merrily,  
His heart prepared, toward the women's city,  
And o'er the stream two thousand women passed  
With crowns and earrings on. There was a forest  
Thick and well watered: all the place was glad,  
And flourishing. The women brought a store  
Of provand and bright, figured tapestries  
Out to a mead and, when Sikandar reached  
The city of Harúm, they flocked to him  
Out of their settlements. Full many a crown  
They proffered him, as well as raiment, gems,  
And things both fair and sweet. These he accepted,  
Received the women with all courtesy,  
And gave them quarters in that charming spot.

When night turned day he visited the city,  
And occupied himself in seeing it.  
Investigating all its usages  
Till all had been made clear. He questioned much  
Surveyed the river, and departed westward.

C. 1339

He found a mighty city of brave men  
 With ruddy faces and with flaxen hair.  
 All fit for battle and the day of fight.

- They came before Sikandar at his bidding  
 With bodies bent and hands upon their heads.  
 He asked their chiefs: "What wonders have ye here?"

An elder thus replied: "Star-favoured Sháh.

And lion-capturer! there is a Deep  
 Beyond the city. Brighter than that water  
 Naught have we seen, for when the radiant sun  
 Arriveth there it setteth in those depths.

Beyond it all is dark and lost to sight,  
 While of that place of darkness I have heard

So many tales that they are numberless.

A man of lore, a worshipper of God,

Declareth that there is a fountain there,

And mine informant, who is wise and great,

Referreth to it as the Fount of Life.

That wise, discerning man said: "How shall one

Who drinketh of the Fount of Life e'er die?

From Paradise it runneth; wash therein

The body, and thy sins will pass away."

Then Cæsar said: "As to this place of gloom,  
 How can beasts fare therein?"

The devotee

Made answer: "Ye must ride upon young horses."

The Sháh bade herdsmen gather to the camp  
 The herds at large and chose ten thousand steeds,  
 All four-year-olds and fit for battle-needs.

## § 29

*How Sikandar went into the Gloom to seek the Water of Life  
and spake with Birds and I-râjîl*

Sikandar, summoning his prudent chiefs,  
 Marched cheerly thence his host and reached a city  
 Whereto he saw no middle and no end.  
 And having all things needful in abundance.  
 'Twas full of garths, parks, halls, and palaces.  
 There he dismounted and at dawn next day  
 Went forward unattended toward the Source  
 Which in his story of the hero's fortunes  
 The rustic minstrel calleth that of Life.  
 He tarried there until the sun, grown pale,  
 Sank in that fount of lapis-lazuli.  
 He saw the wonder wrought by holy God—  
 The Bright One's disappearance from the world—  
 Returned to camp, and pondered much. That night  
 He prayed to God, mused on the Fount of Life, C. 1340  
 First chose the most enduring of his troops,  
 Took with him food for forty days and more  
 And went forth eagerly to look on wonders.  
 He camped his other troops within the city,  
 And sought and found a guide. Khizr, who was chief  
 Among the nobles of that folk, advised him.  
 Sikandar did as Khizr enjoined, surrendered  
 Both heart and soul to his allegiance,  
 And said: "Shrewd-hearted man! be diligent  
 Herein, and if we shall obtain the Water  
 Of Life then we will pass much time in prayer.  
 He will not die who nurtureth thus his soul,  
 And in his wisdom refugeeth with God.  
 I have two signets that in sight of water  
 Shine out at night like suns. Take one, lead on,  
 And tender well thy person and thy life:

The other one shall light me on my way.  
 I go amid the Darkness with mine escort.  
 And we will see what God omnipotent  
 Preserveth hidden where so much is seen.  
 Thou art my leader, and He is my refuge.  
 And showeth me the Water and the Way."

Now when the troops marched toward the Fount of  
 Life

A shout rose from the desert : " God is great ! " <sup>1</sup>

Khizr left that station and all food behind him,  
 And fared thus for two days and nights while none  
 Bestirred his lips to eat. Upon the third  
 Two ways showed mid the Darkness, and the Sháh  
 Lost trace of Khizr. What while the prophet went  
 Toward the Fount of Life, exalting thus  
 His living head to Saturn, bathed his body  
 And head in that bright Water, sought no guard  
 Save God, drank, rested, and returned apace,  
 More instant ever both in prayer and praise,  
 Sikandar reached the light and saw a mountain  
 Both high and bright, and on its top four columns  
 Of aloë-wood uplifted to the clouds.  
 On every column was a mighty nest,  
 And in each nest there sat a huge, green bird,  
 Which, speaking loudly in the Rúman tongue,  
 Hailed the victorious master of the world,  
 Who hurried to them when he heard. One said :—  
 " O votary of toil ! what seekest thou  
 Within this Wayside Inn, for though thou raisest  
 Thy head to heaven above it will dismiss thee  
 In grief at last ' But now that thou hast come,  
 Hast seen aught built of reeds or reed-baked bricks ? "   
 He answered : " Both : our dwellings are directly  
 Or indirectly made with reeds."

The bird,

<sup>1</sup> Alláh akbar. Properly " God is greatest." This part is very Arabic.



On hearing this reply, perched lower down,  
Astonying that worshipper of God,  
And asked him: "Hast thou heard within the world  
The sounds of harp, of reveller, and song?"

He made this answer: "One, whose lot it is  
To have no share in joy, the glad account not  
Although for them he pour out heart and soul."

From that tall column of lign-aloe-wood  
The bird flew to the ground; its musky perch  
Was void. The bird inquired: "Do understanding  
And right prevail or do defect and guile?"

The Sháh made answer: "He that seeketh know-  
ledge  
Is eminent in every company."

Back from dark ground to column went the bird  
And, having cleaned its talons with its beak,  
Inquired of Cæsar: "Why do devotees  
Dwell on the mountains?"

"The devout," he said,  
"Find not another place so good for worship."

The bird ran up the column to its nest.  
The monarch was delighted with that fowl.  
Which with its talons sharpened up its bill  
In full security. Then it instructed  
Sikandar to ascend the topmost peak.  
Afoot and unescorted, there to see  
That which would cause the merriest to weep.  
On hearing this he went toward the mountain  
Alone to view the sight upon its summit,  
And there saw Isráfil, with trump in hand  
And head uplifted, standing at his post,  
Wind on his lips and moisture in his eye,  
Till God shall bid him blow. On seeing Sikandar  
He roared like thunder: "O thou slave of greed!  
Toil not so much, because some day a Call  
Will reach thine ears. Be less concerned for crown

And throne. Make ready to depart and bind  
The baggage on."

"It is my lot from fortune,"  
The Sháh replied, "for save by stir and roaming  
I may not look on sight and mystery."

He then descended, wailing and imploring  
The Giver of all good, and, with a guide  
Preceding him, advanced along that route,  
Involved in gloom, which when the army entered  
A cry ascended from the darksome heights:—

C. 1342 "He that shall take a stone up from the road  
Will grieve for what he beareth in his hand,  
And if he taketh none he will repent,  
And heartily in each case seek a cure."

The soldiers all gave ear, and every one  
Grew thoughtful at that cry since, whether they  
Took stones or no, must they not count on ills?  
One said: "It is the punishment of guilt  
To bear repentance and the stones as well."

Another said: "We should take some; perchance  
We may not have to savour pain and toil."

One man took of the stones; another left them;  
A third through indolence took little ones.  
When from the region of the Fount of Life  
They reached the plain, emerging from the Gloom,  
Each sought the truth and then perceived the trick.  
One had his bosom full of jewels cut,  
Another his with jewels in the rough,  
And both regretted that they had so few;  
Why had they passed by emeralds as vile?  
But sorrier still was he that picked up none  
At leaving precious gems as he had done.

## § 30

*How Sikandar went to the East, saw Wonders, and built a  
Barrier against Yájúj and Májúj*

Two weeks he tarried and, when rested, marched.

He set forth eastward, having seen the west ;

His purpose in the world was wayfaring.

Now as he went he saw a noble city ;

“ No wind or dust passed o’er it ” thou wouldst say.

Whenas the drums beat on the elephants

The chiefs came out two miles to welcome him.

The Sháh, on seeing them, received them well,

Exalting them o’er circling Sol. and asked :—

“ What matchless marvels have ye in these parts ? ”

They loosed their tongues and thus bewailed their  
fortune :—

“ A very grievous case confronteth us,

And we will tell it to the conquering Sháh.

By reason of this cloud-capt mountain-range

Our hearts are full of anguish, toil, and grief.

Since for resistance we are powerless

Yájúj there and Májúj give us no sleep.

For when a portion of them reach our city

Our portion is all misery and travail.

Their faces all resemble those of beasts.

Their tongues are black. their eyes like blood. their  
faces

Are black, their teeth are like wild boars’ : Who dareth

Draw nigh to them ? Their bodies all are clad

C. 1343

With hair. the hue of indigo their breasts,

Their bosoms, and their ears resemble those

Of elephants. They sleep upon one ear,

And use the other as a coverlet.<sup>1</sup>

The mothers have a thousand children each.

<sup>1</sup> See p. So.

And who can reckon them? They herd like beasts,  
They go apace and run like onagers.  
In spring, when clouds roar and the green sea heaveth,  
The clouds draw up great monsters from the waves.  
While air is roaring like a mighty lion,  
And pour them down in masses: then these folk  
Come troop on troop and batten year by year  
Upon these monsters and thereby grow lusty  
In limbs and body. Afterward they feed  
On herbage, scattering to gather it.  
In winter they are pale and thin, their voices  
Like doves'; but through those monsters in the spring  
They are as wolves and roar right lustily.  
Now if the great Sháh could devise a means  
To liberate our hearts from this distress,  
He will receive the praise of every one,  
And will prolong his sojourn in the world.  
Exert thy power and do this work for us,  
For thou too needest help from holy God."

Sikandar mused at them, grew grave, and pondered,  
Then answered thus: "I will defray the cost;  
Your city must provide both aid and labour.  
By help of God, our Guide and Succourer,  
I will reduce this way of theirs to reason."

All cried: "May fortune's ills be far from thee,  
O Sháh! We are the slaves of thy good pleasure,  
Thy lifelong servitors. We will supply  
All that thou need'st, for we have no concern  
More urgent."

So Sikandar came and viewed  
The heights, and took with him a troop of sages.  
He ordered to bring blacksmiths, copper, brass.  
And heavy hammers, mortar, stone, and fire-wood  
Past reckoning, bring all things requisite.  
They brought him everything that he demanded  
In measureless supplies. When all was ready,

And planned, the masons and the smiths, all those  
Of mastery in their trade throughout the world,  
Assembled to Sikandar to assist him  
In that most needful work. From every province  
The experts mustered and he built two walls  
Across the mountain-pass from base to crest.  
One hundred royal cubits broad one cubit  
Of charcoal, one of iron, in between  
C. 1344  
Strewed copper, and showered sulphur in the midst.  
Such is the craft and subtlety of kings '  
He laid thus his materials course on course  
And when from top to bottom all was set,  
They mixed much ghee and naphtha, poured it over  
Those substances, and on the top shot charcoal  
In ass-loads. Then the Shah bade fire the whole,  
And five score thousand smiths blew up the flames.  
As bidden by that king victorious.  
A sound of blowing went up from the mountain,  
The stars were frightened at the glowing fire.  
Thus passed a season with the fire in blast.  
And smiths a-toil. They ran the substances  
Together, fusing them in that fierce blaze.  
Thus was the world delivered from Yājūj  
And from Mājūj, and earth grew habitable  
For by Sikandar's famous barrier  
The world escaped the misery of strife.  
It was five hundred cubits high, about  
One hundred broad. The nobles blessed the Sháh.  
And said: "May neither time nor earth lack thee."

They brought before him in abundant store  
Whatever was the produce of those parts.  
He would accept of naught and went his ways:  
His doings filled the whole world with amaze.

## § 31

*How Sikandar saw a Corpse in a Palace of Jewels on the Top  
of a Mountain, and the Speaking Tree, and how he was  
warned of his Death*

He marched one month till Sháh and troops were  
weary.

At length he reached a mount where he beheld not  
A man or beast. Its peak he saw to be  
Of lapis-lazuli and thereupon  
A palace built of topazes, with lustres  
Of crystal everywhere, and in the middle  
A fount of brackish water. A ruby served  
For lamp and lighted palace, mount, and heights,  
The light fell on the water, and the jewel  
Illumed the palace like the sun. Beside  
The fount was set a double golden throne  
Where lay a hapless one with human body  
And with a wild boar's head—a helpless corpse  
On that fine throne. His couch beneath was camphor,  
And o'er him spread a mantle of brocade.  
C. 1345 Whoever went to carry aught away,  
Or even trod the dust upon the floor,  
Died in convulsions on the spot. A cry  
Came from that briny fount: "O slave of greed!  
Be not so mad. Much hast thou seen that none  
Besides hath seen. 'Tis time to draw thy rein  
Because thy life is ending, and thy throne  
Of sovereignty is going all astray."

Sikandar feared, turned him about apace,  
And came back to his camp as swift as smoke.  
He marched thence quickly, wailing and invoking  
The name of God, then from that mountain took  
The desert-route in dudgeon and concerned  
About his life. All sorrow and in tears

He went with troops behind and guides before  
 Till, by that desert-route, he reached a city,  
 And joyed to hear the voice of men. The land  
 Was all a garden, gladding to delight  
 The heart of man. The magnates of the city—  
 The men of valour—went to welcome him :  
 All praised him, showering on him gold and gems.  
 And said : “ O Sháh ! how blessed ’tis that thou  
 Shouldst traverse thus our coasts ! No host before  
 E’er visited this city, none of us  
 E’er heard the name of Sháh, but now that thou  
 Hast come our souls are thine, and mayst thou be  
 In spirit lucid and in body hale.”

Sikandar gladdened in his heart at them.  
 He rested from the desert-march, and asked :—  
 “ Of marvel what is there for me to note ? ”  
 The guides thus answered : “ O victorious Sháh,  
 And pure of rede ! there is a wonder here,  
 Whose match none in the world of small and great  
 E’er hath beheld—a tree with double trunk—  
 A marvel manifest. One trunk is female,  
 The other male ; they speak, have boughs, and flourish.  
 At night the female yieldeth speech and perfume,  
 The male doth speak by day.”

Sikandar went  
 With cavaliers of Rûm and native chiefs  
 Of whom he asked : “ This tree—when speaketh it  
 Aloud ? ” The interpreter replied : “ One trunk  
 Will talk or ever day’s ninth hour hath passed,  
 So that the auspicious Sháh will hear its voice.  
 When it is night the female trunk will speak :  
 Its foliage will savour as ’twere musk.”

The Sháh asked : “ When we pass the tree, good friend !      C. 1346  
 What marvel meet we then ? ”

“ Of going further,”  
 The interpreter replied, “ there is no question.

There is no place beyond it, and guides call it  
 'The World's End.'"

Then the blest Sháh with his Rúmans  
 Set forward. When he reached the speaking tree  
 The ground was seething hot, and all its surface  
 Was hid by beasts' skins.

"What are these, and who  
 Hath torn beasts thus?" he asked of his informant,  
 Who said: "The tree hath many devotees,  
 Who, if they hunger while engaged in worship,  
 Feed on the flesh of beasts."

When Sol attained  
 The apex of heaven's vault Sikandar heard  
 Aloft a cry proceeding from the leaves  
 Of that tall tree—an awful, boding cry.  
 He feared and asked of the interpreter:—  
 "Shrewd, trusty friend! what say the talking leaves,  
 Because they bathe my heart in lymph of blood?"

The guide replied: "O favourite of fortune!  
 The leaves upon the boughs of this tree say:—  
 'Why doth Sikandar roam so o'er the world,  
 For he hath had his portion of good things,  
 And, when he shall have reigned for twice seven years,  
 Must quit the throne of sovereignty?"

Sikandar  
 Wept tears of blood; the guide's words wrung his heart.  
 Thenceforth he spake to no one, but remained  
 All sorrowful till midnight. Then the leaves  
 Upon the other trunk gave utterance.  
 Again the Sháh asked of his friendly guide:—  
 "What is it that the other branches say?"

Thus his informant solved the mystery:—  
 "The female branches say: 'Thou travailest  
 In this wide world for greed and for addition.  
 Why torture thus thy soul? It is thy passion  
 To go about the world, afflicting folk



And slaying kings. Thou hast not long to live :  
Do not thyself cloud and contract thy days.' ”

The great king asked of the interpreter :—  
“ O good, discerning man ! inquire if I  
Shall be in Rúm when my dark day shall come.  
And if my mother see me not alive  
Will she at last enshroud this face of mine ? ”

The speaking tree said to the Sháh : “ Be speedy,  
And bind the baggage on. Thy mother, kindred  
In Rúm, and face-veiled ladies there will look  
On thee no more. Death in an alien land  
Will come ere long, crown, diadem, and throne  
Grow tired of thee.”

C. 1347

He heard and left the tree.  
Heart-stricken by the scimitar of fortune.  
When he reached camp the noble native chiefs  
Went home and, when they had made ready gifts,  
Came hurrying to the Sháh. There were a breastplate,  
Resplendent as the Nile and wide and broad  
As is an elephant's hide, two elephant-tusks  
Five cubits long—a toil to lift—mail-coats  
And rich brocade, and, made of solid gold,  
A hundred eggs, each weighing sixty mans<sup>1</sup>  
If weighed as drachms, and a rhinoceros  
In gold and gems. Accepting these he led  
His host away and tears—his heart's blood—shed.

### § 32

*How Sikandar marched his Army to Chín, carried his own  
Letter to Faghfúr, and returned to his Army with the Answer*

He led his army thence toward Chín and raised  
The chiefs' heads to the Pleiads. Stage by stage  
He crossed the desert till in forty days

<sup>1</sup> The weight of the “man” varies with the locality. The “man of Tabriz”—the smallest— = from 7 to 7½ lbs. av.

He reached the sea,<sup>1</sup> dismounted there his troops  
 And pitched the camp-enclosure of brocade.  
 He ordered then a scribe to write a letter  
 As from Sikandar, conqueror of cities,  
 Bade that the letter should comprise all kinds  
 Of fair and foul, and, when the scribe had finished.  
 Went as ambassador. He chose a Persian,  
 A shrewd man, one with him in heart and word,  
 To bid him "Do" or "Do not." Then he gave  
 The captain of the host charge of the troops,  
 And of the Rúmans took with him five sages.

When tidings reached Faghfúr: "There is an envoy  
 Approaching Chín" he sent a force of troops  
 To meet him, and Sikandar fared in state.  
 He reached that spacious court. Faghfúr beheld  
 That chosen troop of valiant men and came,  
 With mind averse and anxious, from the entry  
 To meet Sikandar who ran up to him,  
 Did him obeisance, and sat long within  
 The hall of audience. Faghfúr gave greeting,  
 Received him well, and lodged him splendidly.

C. 1348 Now when the bright Lamp rose above the mountains  
 They brought a horse caparisoned with gold,  
 And summoned the Sháh's envoy to the presence.  
 Sikandar spake at large, said what was fit,  
 Then gave the letter, and recalled what Cæsar  
 Had said. The letter's superscription ran:—  
 "From Rúm's Sháh, who is world-lord and the prince  
 Of every march and land, whom other monarchs  
 Praise, to Faghfúr, the glory of the realm."

The letter thus began: "Praise to the Maker  
 From us His slaves," and then went on to say:—  
 "Our will for Chín is this, that it should prosper.  
 Ye should not fight us; that cut short Fúr's life.  
 So was it with Dára, who ruled the world,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 174.

Faryán the Arab, and with other chiefs.  
 From west to east none hath escaped our sway.  
 Heaven knoweth not the number of my troops  
 Though Venus, Mercury, and Sol shall count them.  
 If thou infringest my command in aught  
 Thou wilt but vex the country and thyself.  
 Prepare thy tribute when thou readest this,  
 Be not aggrieved, and meddle not with evil.  
 If thou wilt come and see me and my host  
 I will regard thee as ally and friend,  
 Assure to thee thy throne and crown. and fortune  
 Shall harm thee not ; but if thou wouldst not come  
 Before thy lord, send to my treasury  
 The rarities of Chín, as golden ware,  
 Swords, steeds and signets, raiment, slaves, and thrones  
 Of ivory, rich brocade and torques and crowns—  
 Whate'er thou hast—as thou wouldst be unscathed  
 By us. Repulse mine army by these means.  
 And keep in safety crown and throne and treasure.  
 Thou know'st both courses now : my host expecteth  
 Thy fall or rise. The Maker bless thee. Mayst  
 Thou ne'er have reason to recall my words !”

The lord of Chín, on seeing such a letter,  
 Was wroth but showed it not and with a smile  
 Said to the envoy : “ Heaven is thy Sháh's consort !  
 Tell what thou canst about his looks, his stature,  
 His prowess, and his speech.”

The envoy said :—  
 “ O chief of Chín ! know, none is like Sikandar  
 On earth. In prowess, bounty, rede, and wisdom,  
 He passeth man's conception. Cypress-tall  
 Is he, an elephant in strength, a Nile  
 In bounty, and in tongue a trenchant sword.  
 His blandness draweth eagles from the clouds.”

Faghfúr, on hearing this, took other order.  
 He bade serve meat and wine, and deck a hall

Within the garth. They quaffed till it was dark,  
 And they were all bemused. The lord of Chín  
 Said to the ambassador: "Be Jupiter  
 Thy Sháh's ally. Tomorrow I will answer,  
 And make the day right glorious in thy sight."

Now when Sol rose in Leo, and the sky  
 Had night alow, Sikandar drew anear,  
 But not with ill prepense. Faghfúr inquired:—  
 "How went the night, for thou wast flushed wine-red  
 Yestre'en when going hence?" then bade a scribe  
 To come with paper, musk, and spicery,  
 And wrote a warm rejoinder, and adorned,  
 Like Paradise, that paper wrought in Chín;  
 And first he praised the Judge, the Lord of manhood.  
 Of justice, and accomplishment, the Lord  
 Of learning, self-control, and Faith, "and may  
 He bless the king of Rúm. Thy courteous envoy  
 Hath reached us with the letter of the Sháh,  
 That seeker after knowledge. We have read  
 Thy royal words and with the great discussed them.  
 For what in fight and feast befell Dará,  
 Son of Dáráb, Faryán, and Fúr whom thou  
 Didst triumph over and become the shepherd,  
 With monarchs as the flock: the Lord of sun  
 And moon so ordered it; impute it not  
 To prowess and the number of thy troops,  
 For when a chief's life endeth 'tis all one  
 To die in feast or fight. Thou foughtest them  
 Upon their fated day which altereth not.  
 Boast not and vaunt not over them, for thou  
 Past doubt wilt pass thyself, though thou be iron.  
 Where are Jamshíd, Zahhák, and Farídún?  
 They came from wind and went to wind again.  
 I neither fear thee nor will fight with thee.  
 Not, as with thee, doth bluster fill my head,  
 Who am not used to bloodshed, while ill-doing

Is not accordant to my Faith. Thou call'st me  
Before thee but in vain, for I serve God,  
Not king. I send thee more than thou dost ask :  
Regarding largess I am not contentious."

Upon his cheek Sikandar felt the blush  
Of shame, his liver arrow-pierced with what  
Faghfúr had said, and thought : " None shall behold me  
Fare in disguise henceforth."

He left the palace, C. 1350  
Went to his lodging, and prepared to leave.  
The great Faghfúr unlocked his treasury ;  
He grudged not bounty. First he bade make ready  
An ivory throne and fifty crowns inlaid  
With gems, and load with gold and silver ware  
A thousand camels and a thousand more  
With silk and satins, with brocade of Chín,  
With camphor, aloe, musk, and spicery.  
He liveth at his ease who scorneth gold.  
Of squirrel, ermine, and of sable pelts,  
Of rugs, of horse-hides, and of weazel-skins,  
The prudent treasurer brought forth and packed  
Of every sort two thousand, brought withal  
High-mettled steeds caparisoned with gold,  
And slave-boys too, three hundred, with gold girdles.  
They brought three hundred red-haired camels laden  
With many a rarity of Chín. Faghfúr  
Chose from among the elders one of weight,  
And sugared speech, and bade him go with greeting  
And message to the Sháh, and bear to him  
The glad news that the chiefs would do him homage  
So long as he was in the coasts of Chín.  
The envoy set forth with Sikandar. Who  
Would think that he was Sháh ? But when the sailors  
Saw him, sprang up, and lightly spread the sails,  
And when the viceroy met him with the troops,

Reporting what had chanced,<sup>1</sup> while all the soldiers  
 Praised him and bent their faces to the ground,  
 The man of Chín perceived: "It is the Sháh!"  
 And went to him afoot protesting loudly.  
 Sikandar said to him: "Make no excuses,  
 And mention not the matter to Faghfúr."

That night he rested and next day at dawn,  
 When he was set in peace upon his throne,  
 He gave the envoy gifts, and said: "May wisdom  
 Be ever thine. Go to Faghfúr and say:—  
 "With us thou hast great honour. Chín is thine,  
 If I may say so, and what more thou wilt.  
 I shall abide at present where I am;  
 One cannot hurry with so large a host."

Back with the speed of wind the envoy hied,  
 And told Faghfúr what Cæsar had replied.

### § 33

*How Sikandar returned from Chín, made War against  
 the Sindians, and went to Yaman*

C. 1351 The Sháh abode a month and when the troops  
 Were rested led them back. From that green sea<sup>2</sup>  
 They fared by wilderness and longsome ways,  
 Stage after stage, until they reached Chaghwán,  
 And saw a fortified and prosperous city.  
 The magnates of the land, those famed and wise,  
 Came to Sikandar's presence while the chiefs  
 Set forward from Chaghwán with offerings,  
 And presents to his gate. At once Sikandar  
 Began to question them: "What sights have ye  
 Of marvel here?"

One said: "We know of none,  
 O king! worth seeing. Beggary and toil

<sup>1</sup> Or "when Sikandar had announced the result of his undertaking."

<sup>2</sup> Or the Green Sea. Cf. NAR, p. 40.

Are here, and thou wilt take naught hence but wind."

The Sháh, on hearing what the speaker said,  
Marched from Chaghwán toward Sind whose cavaliers  
Went out to meet him while from Hind came help.  
All those heart-stricken on account of Fúr,  
Their hands all bathed in blood, brought elephants,  
And Indian bells. Arose the battlecry.  
And clarion's blare. The Sindians' chief was named  
Bandáwa, an illustrious cavalier,  
And puissant. The armies shocked together,  
And earth became all mountain-like with slain.  
Night came; no Sindian stayed upon that field.  
Sikandar led his army in pursuit,  
And captured elephants fourscore and five,  
As well as golden crowns and scimitars  
And treasures. Women, children, and old men  
Went weeping to the Sháh while on his way,  
And said: "O prudent Sháh! restrain thyself,  
Burn not our land, slay not our little ones,  
For thy day too will pass, and blest is he  
That walketh innocently."

He had no ruth,  
Not sparing e'en the wounded. They enslaved  
A host of women, children, young, and old.  
He went toward Nímruz by way of Bust,  
And purged the world of foes. Thence he proceeded,  
World-conquering with his famed host, Yaman-ward,  
Whose monarch, hearing, went with chiefs to meet  
him,

Selecting native gifts of price and fair,  
As was most fit—of striped stuff of Yaman  
Ten camel-loads and five of gold, ten more  
Of drachms (when drachms are had hearts are not sad),  
A thousand frails of saffron, with brocade  
And raiment past compute. Among his treasures  
He had a cup of emerald and pearls

Unpierced, in number seventy-five, besides  
 A cup of lapis-lazuli containing  
 Three score of topazes and on the top  
 Ten ruby signet-rings. These he delivered  
 To those in waiting with his benisons.  
 They reached the camp-enclosure of the Sháh  
 With all these gifts and offerings. Sikandar  
 Saluted and received the monarch well,  
 And seated him beside the throne, and he—  
 The monarch of Yaman—blessed him and said :—  
 “ Be victor with thy troops. ’Twill give me joy  
 If thou wilt sojourn with me for two months  
 That Sháh and host may rest them from the road.”  
 Sikandar blessed him, saying : “ May thy mate  
 Be wisdom ever.”

When the morning came  
 Yaman’s king went his way, and all that coast  
 Resounded with the romage of the host.

### § 34

*How Sikandar marched toward Bábíl and found the  
 Treasure of Kai Khusrau in a City*

Sikandar led his troops toward Bábíl ;  
 The air was hidden by their dust. He marched,  
 He and his host, a month ; they saw no rest-place.  
 At length they reached a mount whose top was  
 hidden.  
 A black cloud rested on it ; thou hadst said :—  
 “ ’Twas near to Saturn.” They could find no road,  
 And Sháh and army halted in dismay.  
 They scaled laboriously the craggy height,  
 And even light-armed troops were overworn.  
 When they were all exhausted by the march  
 A deep sea showed upon the farther side.



The host rejoiced to view sea, plain, and road.  
They marched toward that deep sea, and praised the  
Maker.

The place was full of beasts; the army lived  
On game. Far off a savage showed all hairy,  
With mighty ears. His body 'neath its fell  
Seemed indigo, his ears like elephant's  
In breadth. On seeing such the soldiers seized  
And bore him to Sikandar who beheld  
Amazed, invoked o'er him the name of God.

C. 1353

And said: "What man art thou? What is thy name?  
What get'st thou from the sea? What seekest thou?"

"My father and my mother," he replied,  
"Gave me, O Sháh! this name of Gúsh-bistar."<sup>1</sup>

The Sháh asked: "What is that amid the water  
Out yonder toward the rising of the sun?"

"O Sháh!" he said, "for ever live renowned.  
There is a city there like Paradise,  
And not, thou wouldest say, compact of earth.  
Thou wilt not look on palace there or house  
Whose outside is not made throughout of bones  
And, brighter than the sun, within the halls  
Are limned the visage of Afrásiyáb,  
And that of Kai Khusrau, the combative.  
His greatness, manliness, and enterprises.  
All these are painted on the bones of fish:  
Thou wilt see nowhere any dust or earth:  
The people live on fish and naught besides.<sup>2</sup>  
Myself I will escort the army thither  
If the famed Sháh shall bid."

Sikandar said

To him with ears: "Go to, fetch me a native  
That I may look upon a novelty."

So Gúsh-bistar set forth at once and made  
All speed to go to city and to folk.

<sup>1</sup> *L.A.* Ear-bed. Cf. p. 163.  
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<sup>2</sup> See p. 69.  
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And gave them Cæsar's message, saying: "The Sháh,  
That famed one, calleth for you."

Of that city,  
When young and old and high and low heard this,  
There went across the water seventy men,  
Possessed of wisdom or advanced in years,  
And clad in silks, and some were young, some old.  
The old and famed bare each a golden cup  
A-brim with pearls, the young bare each a crown.  
They came to Cæsar, bowed, and revered him;  
They held long talk with him and said: "The trea-  
sures

Of Kai Khusrau are in our custody,  
And would befit a new Sháh like thyself."

Thereat Sikandar hurried o'er the water  
Toward their city, viewed it all—its marts,  
And streets—and visited the treasure-house.  
The hoard was all of crowns and thrones of gold,  
With coronets and necklaces and girdles.  
None knew its worth for none could reckon it.  
The Sháh took all and sped to camp, rejoicing.  
He stayed that night, but when cock-crow had come  
Rose at his gate the sound of kettledrum.

C. 1354

## § 35

*How Sikandar went to the City of Bâbil, wrote a Letter to  
Arastâlis, and received his Answer*

Sikandar marched thence to Bâbil; the earth  
Was hidden by his host. He knew that death  
Was near and that his day was overcast,  
And thought to leave none of the royal race  
To lead an army to make war on Rûm,  
And set his foot upon that prosperous land.  
When this thought gat possession of his brain

He wrote a letter to Arastális,  
 And said: "It is my purpose not to leave  
 One of the royal seed. I have been round  
 The seven climes and taken many princes.  
 In sooth my death is nigh, so day hath darkened."

He bade that every one of Kaian seed  
 Should make him ready to appear at court.  
 Not dreaming of foul play. Now when they bare  
 The letter to the sage his heart was riven.  
 He answered instantly and, thou hadst said,  
 Made of the lashes of his eye his pen-point:—<sup>1</sup>  
 "The letter of the world's king hath arrived.  
 Thou must withhold thy hand from evil-doing,  
 Abandon this ill purpose, expiate  
 The thought by giving alms, restrain thyself,  
 Commit thyself to God and in the world  
 Sow only seed of good. We live for death,  
 For die we must past help. None hath borne off  
 The kingship with him, but hath gone and left  
 His greatness to another. So be ware.  
 Shed not the blood of princes else a curse  
 Will be upon thee till the Resurrection.  
 Again, when for the Íránian troops no Shah  
 Shall sit upon the throne hosts will arrive  
 From Turkistán and Hind, Sakláb and Chín,  
 Arrive from all sides, and 'twill be no marvel  
 If they that take Írán shall war with Rúm.  
 Not e'en a breath must harm the Kaian-born.  
 Convoke the Rúman and Íránian chiefs  
 To merrymake, feast, conference, and banquet.  
 Appoint to every chief a fitting province,  
 And start a new roll with the names of Rúman  
 And of Íránian chiefs at whose expense  
 Thou hast obtained the world, but give to none

C. 1355

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* either "with the tears running down his pen" or "with great subtlety."

The lordship o'er another and withal  
 Call none of them the Sháh, and let these Kaians  
 Serve as the shields of thine own land if thou  
 Wouldst have not Rúm invaded."

When Sikandar  
 Received this answer he made haste to change  
 His purpose and bade summon to his court  
 The Rúman and Íránian notables  
 That were possessed of valour, ranked them duly.  
 And drew the patents so that none should seek  
 The least addition to the share assigned him.  
 To these renowned and independent princes  
 They gave the name of "Tribal Kings."

The night  
 Whereon Sikandar reached Bábil, and saw  
 The chiefs right glad to look on him again,  
 A woman bare a child that filled beholders  
 With wonderment. It had a lion's head  
 With hoofs for feet, an ox's tail, the breast  
 And shoulders of a man. The monster died  
 At birth but, though such things are best forgotten.  
 They bare it to the Sháh forthwith who gazed  
 Thereon with horror, held it ominous,  
 And said: "Let this be hidden by the dust."

He summoned many readers of the stars,  
 And held discourse at large of that dead child.  
 In great dismay they veiled their views thereon  
 From that fair-fortuned Sháh who raged, and said:—  
 "If aught be hid forthwith I will behead you,  
 And naught but lions' maws shall be your shroud!"

The Sháh being wroth, they told him: "Famous king!  
 That thou wast born beneath the Sign of Leo  
 Was patent both to archmage and to chief.  
 Thou seest the lion-like head on this dead child:  
 So will the head of thine own empire droop.  
 All thine astrologers have said as much

Already and adduced the signs."

Sikandar,

On hearing this, was grieved : his wits and counsel  
Failed, and he said : "Death is past cure. My heart  
Is not concerned thereat. No longer life  
Is mine. Our period waxeth not nor waneth."

He sickened at Bâbil that very day,  
Knew that calamity was near and called  
A veteran scribe before him to impart  
The dispositions that he had at heart.

### § 36

#### *Sikandar's Letter to his Mother*

He bade to write a letter to his mother,  
And said to her : "One cannot blink Death's presage :  
In this world I have had the appointed share,  
And waned life waxeth not. Grieve not at all  
About my death, for death is no new thing :  
Royal or base whoe'er is born must die.  
I will instruct the Rúman chiefs that when  
They quit this land they must consult thy pleasure  
In all things and obey thee loyally.  
On every prince among the Íránians,  
That might have caused calamity to Rúmans  
I have bestowed a province. Now when each  
Of these hath entered on his government,  
Good sooth, he will have no desire for Rúm :  
Our marches and our land will rest from foes.  
Embalm me dead upon the soil of Misr,  
And spill no word of mine. Of my dínárs  
Bestow one hundred thousand every year  
Upon the husbandmen : and should a son  
Be born to Rúshanak his father's name  
In truth will live, and Rúm must have no king

C. 1356

Save him, for he will renovate that land :  
 But in her travail if she bear a daughter  
 Espouse her to the son of Failakús :  
 Call him my son, not son-in-law, and keep  
 Within the world through him my memory green.  
 Send back too seathless to her sire in state  
 Kaid's daughter with her own devoted slaves,  
 And purses. Furnish litters for the journey :  
 Send too the crowns and gems, the gold and silver  
 Brought by her from her sire, to Hindústán  
 Whene'er she would depart. I have achieved  
 All that I purposed here and now perforce  
 Must think of death. List to my last requests.  
 And add not thereunto. First fashion me  
 A golden coffin. Let my shroud be made  
 In worthy fashion of gold cloth of Chín,  
 And saturate with ambergris, and let  
 No pains be spared for me, but seal my coffin  
 With pitch and camphor musk and spicery.  
 First pour in honey, let it be above.  
 And let there be brocade of Chín below :  
 Then let my corpse be laid inside the coffin,  
 And, when ye veil my visage, there an end.  
 O my wise mother ! keep in mind my counsel  
 While life endureth. All that I have gathered  
 From Hind, Túrán, Makrán, Írán, and Chín.  
 Keep thou, but give thy superfluities,  
 What thou canst not enjoy thyself away.  
 'Tis my desire for thee, my loving mother !  
 That thou be watchful and serene of soul,  
 And not too toilful for none tarrieth here  
 For ever. Surely when thy day is done  
 Our souls will meet again. 'Tis nobler far  
 To suffer than to love, and 'tis the mean  
 That yield to passion. Since my body once  
 Was all thy care for months and years, now pray

To God for my pure soul and help me thus.  
For prayer is all in all. Behold and see  
If there be any in earth's round whose soul  
Is stricken not at death."

He sealed and closed  
The letter, and bade men on speedy steeds  
Convey these tidings from Bābil to Rūm :—  
"The Grace of king of kingship is bedimmed !"

Now when the army was aware thereof  
The world was darkened to the chiefs, who set  
Their faces toward the throne of majesty,  
And all the world was full of hue and cry.

§ 37

*How Sikandar's Life ended and how they carried  
his Coffin to Iskandarīya*

On hearing how the army was bestead  
And knowing that his time was near, Sikandar  
Bade carry from the palace to the field  
His throne. The troops bewailed his malady  
When they beheld the Shāh's pale face. The plain  
Was one great cry ; they seethed as on quick fire.  
All said : "What misadventure for the Rūmans  
To lose their king ! Ill fortune is upon us,  
And field and fell henceforth are desolate :  
Our foes have won their wish and gained their goal :  
The world becometh bitter to us now ;  
In public and in private we shall wail "

With failing voice said Caesar : " Be devout,  
Wise, modest, and heed all my last requests.  
If ye would prosper both in soul and body.  
When I have gone the work is left for you,  
And fortune is not dealing ill with me."

He spake, his life departed, and that Shāh

So famous, that host-shatterer, passed away.  
 A cry went up from all the host and split  
 The ears of heaven. The soldiers all strewed dust  
 Upon their heads and strained their hearts' blood  
 through

The lashes of their eyes. They fired his palace,  
 And docked a thousand steeds reversing all  
 Their saddles. Thou hadst said: "The earth lamenteth."  
 They bore the golden bier out to the plain,  
 And wailing pierced the sky. A prelate laved  
 The corpse with clear rose-water, and besprinkled  
 Thereon pure camphor. Of gold-woven brocade  
 They made his winding-sheet, while all bewailed him,  
 And, having shrouded thus that noble form  
 Beneath brocade of Chín, they covered it  
 With honey to the feet and then sealed down  
 The lid of that strait coffin: passed away  
 That Tree so fruitful and so shadowing!  
 Thou bidest not within this Hostel. Why  
 Toy then with crown or cling to treasury?

Now when they raised the coffin from the plain,  
 And passed it on from hand to hand, two voices—  
 A Rúman and a Persian—rose, and all  
 The talk was of the coffin. All the Persians  
 Said thus: "He should be buried in Írán  
 Where are the ashes of the kings of kings:  
 Why should ye speed the coffin round the world?"

One of the Rúman counsellors replied:—  
 "It is not fitting here to bury him.  
 If ye will hear my rede aright Sikandar  
 Should pass back to the soil wherefrom he sprang."

A Persian said withal: "Howe'er ye talk  
 This will reach no fair ending. I will show you  
 A field commemorating Sháhs of old.  
 Wise ancients call it Khurm. It hath a lake  
 And forest, and in answer to thy questions



A voice, which every one may hear, will speak  
 Out of the mountain. Thither bear some ancient  
 In his decrepitude, and there too stay  
 The coffin. Let him ask. Then if the mountain  
 Reply 'twill rede you well."

Like mountain-sheep  
 They hurried to the wood that he called Khurm.  
 They asked their question and this answer came:—

Why long delay the coffin of the Sháh?  
 Iskandariya, which he built in life,  
 Is destined to contain Sikandar's dust."

The soldiers heard the voice and bare away  
 The coffin from the wood without delay.

### § 38

*How the Sages and other Folk lamented Sikandar*

Now when they brought him to Iskandariya C. 1359  
 Another dispensation ruled the world.  
 They set his coffin on the plain: all earth  
 Was full of hue and cry. Men, women, children,  
 Above a hundred thousand had one reckoned,  
 Flocked to Iskandariya to the coffin.  
 The wise Arastáls stood forth; a world,  
 With eyes all tears of blood, was watching him.  
 He laid his hand on that strait coffin, saying:—  
 "God-fearing Sháh! where are thy prudence, knowledge,  
 And rede that this strait coffin should become  
 Thy home? In youth's day, after these few years,  
 Why hast thou chosen the dust for pillowing?"

The Rúman sages all assembled there:  
 One said: "O brazen-bodied Elephant!  
 Who overthrew thee? Who desired thy place?  
 Where now are all thy shrewdness and wise counsel?"

Another said : "Thou laidest up much gold :  
Why now is gold embracing thus thy body ?"

Another said : "No man escaped thy hand,  
But why, O Sháh ! didst thou rub hands with Death ?"

Another : "Thou hast rest from pain and toil  
As well as from the quest of rule and treasure."

Another : "When thou goest before thy Judge  
That which thou sowed'st thou shalt reap withal."

Another : "Impotent is he that used  
To shed the blood of kings."

Another said :—  
"Soon shall we be as thou art, thou that wast  
An uncut gem."

Another said : "The Master,  
On seeing thee, will teach thee things forgotten."

Another said : "Since he hath been death-smitten  
We should not clutch at self-aggrandisement."

Another said : "O higher than moon and sun '  
Why hidest thou from all thy goodly face ?"

Another said : "A man of many parts  
Is fain to cover him face-deep in gold,  
But now, O man of such accomplishment,  
And brave ! the yellow gold hath whelméd thee !"

Another said : "Thou hast put on brocade,  
And veiled to us therewith thy lovely looks.  
Now lift thy head therefrom, for crown and armlet,  
And ivory throne. of thee are all in quest."

"Thou hast been severed from thy moon-faced  
youths."

Another said, "and thralls of Chín and Rúm.  
And huggest gold to thee. Oh ! deal not thus,  
'Tis not kings' usage, with brocade and gold."

C. 1300 Another said : "What well advised reply  
Will come to thee now that the Questioner  
Will question thee, and say : 'Why didst thou shed  
The blood of great men, and with so much stress

Didst struggle after treasure? Didst not see  
How many of the great have died and borne  
Naught from the world with them except the fame  
Of their good deeds?"

Another said: "Thy day  
Is over-passed, thy tongue hath ceased to parle.  
Now wilt thou see a mighty Court—a world  
Wherein the sheep is parted from the wolf.<sup>1</sup>  
The observer of thy throne and crown should turn  
His reins from greatness for, as 'tis with thee  
It will abide with none. The tree of greatness  
Should not be planted!"

Said another: "Thy deeds  
Are turned to wind, the chiefs' heads quit of thee."

Another said: "Why in this Wayside Inn  
Laboriously didst thou employ thyself,  
Since this is all that thou hast gained by toil?  
A narrow coffin is thine only wealth.  
Thou seekest not the trumpet-call but choosest  
The bondage of a bier?"

Another said:—  
"What time thy troops depart thou wilt remain  
All by thyself on this wide waste good sooth!  
With longing eyes pursue them as they go.  
And mourn thine own lost life with boundless woe."

### § 39

*How the Mother and Wife of Sikandar lamented him*

Then came Sikandar's mother hurrying,  
And long while pressed her visage over him.  
She said: "O thou illustrious king of kings,  
Lord of the world, star-favoured and devout!

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P

Near as thou art, thou art yet far from me,  
Far from thy host, thy kingdom, and thy people.  
May my soul wait on thine. and be their hearts  
Plucked out that joy hereat."

Then Rúshanak  
Came full of anguish, saying: "Noble Sháh!  
Where are Dárá, son of Dáráb, the master  
And up-stay of the world,<sup>1</sup> and all the kings  
Whose head the blast sent dustward on the day  
Of battle? Like a fierce cloud charged with hail  
Wast thou and safe, I would have said, from death.  
With so much warfare, combating, and bloodshed  
In single action and in stricken field,  
I would have said that fate had given thee  
Safe conduct, and thou keepest from thy men  
The secret, yet hast thou, when thou hadst voided  
The world of chiefs, cast off the imperial crown,  
C. 1361 And when the tree which thou hadst planted bore  
I see thee with the dust to comrade thee!"

Now when the Crown of heaven had set, and when  
The mighty men had had their fill of talk,  
They hid Sikandar's coffin in the dust.

To do such things the world is not afraid;  
It merely giveth back what it conveyed  
From wind at first, and this I hold to be  
Not clearly justice yet not tyranny.  
To thee the how and why are hidden things,  
And past the reach of subjects and of kings.  
Yet beauty, kindness, generosity,  
With good and joyance, still are left to thee;  
And, be thou chief or subject, with such store  
I see not aught that thou canst wish for more:  
But if thou leavest here a name for vice  
Thou'lt lose God's grace and jocund Paradise.<sup>2</sup>

The ancient Hostel's wont is still the same:

<sup>1</sup> Couplet omitted

<sup>2</sup> Reading with P.

Sikandar went, but left behind him fame.  
 Though able six and thirty kings to slay  
 Where is his portion in the world to-day?  
 Ten cities were erected 'neath his sway,  
 All splendid, but ten thorn-brakes now are they.  
 He sought what no man ever sought before,  
 And wide-spread fame is left him but no more,  
 Yet fame is good for fame will not decay  
 Like some old dwelling weather-worn away.

The barrier of Sikandar we have past.  
 May all be well and of auspicious cast.  
 And may the monarch of the world<sup>1</sup> be still  
 Of joyous heart and free from every ill.

## § 40

*Firdausi's Complaint of the Sky and Appeal to God*

High-springing arch of heaven! Oh! why dost thou.

When eld is on me, keep me thus forlorn!

Thou madest much of me in youth but now

Thou passest my decrepitude with scorn.

The pampered blossoms take a sallow hue.

The pictured silk is cheapened by much stress

The dainty cypress-tree is bent in two

Within the garth, the bright lamp lustreless,

The mountain-top once black is capped with snow,

The soldiers mark the Sháh's deficiencies:

Thou wast a mother to me long ago,

Who needs shed blood-drops at thy tyrannies.

I find no wisdom or good faith in thee:

Thy dark proceedings aggravate my lot:

Oh! would that thou hadst never nurtured me

Or, having nurtured, persecuted not!

<sup>1</sup> Mahmúd.

Whene'er I quit this gloom I will arraign

This tyranny of thine before the Just,  
Of thee before the All Holy One complain

With clamourings and head bestrewn with dust.

C. 1362 Time saw how eld increased my misery,

But laid the more part of the blame on me.

And thus to me high heaven made reply:—

“O thou that art not wronged and yet dost cry!

Why lookest thou to me for good and ill?

Do such complaints as thine become the sage?

In everything thou betterest me still.

And canst the famine of thy soul assuage

With knowledge. Food, sleep, choice of home are thine:

To good and ill 'tis thine to seek the path;

All that thou chargest is no fault of mine,

For neither sun nor moon such knowledge hath.

Ask Him that made them to be Guide to thee,

Made day and night, religion, law, who saith:—

‘Be,’ and all is as He would have it be.

A fool is he that knoweth other Faith.

In His creation I am but a thrall.

A servant unto Him who fashioned me:

To do His bidding is mine all in all:

I never swerve from His authority.

Turn then to God, to Him for succour fly.

Imploring no unconscionable boon.

And own that none is master of the sky

Save He that kindled Venus, Sun, and Moon

His blessing on Muhammad's spirit be,

And on his comrades all increasingly.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 196.

### III

## THE ASHKÁNIAN DYNASTY





XXI

THE ASHKÁNIANS

THEY REIGNED TWO HUNDRED YEARS

ARGUMENT

THE poet praises Sultán Mahmúd and then, having no subject-matter in connexion with this dynasty, proceeds to narrate the story of the rise of the race of Sásán in the person of Ardshír Pápakán and of his triumph over Ardawán, the last of the Ashkánians. He then goes on to tell of Ardshír's campaign against the Kurds, and of the strange case of Haftwád and the Worm.

NOTE

The abridgment of the epoch of the Ashkánians to 200 years is more drastic even than that of other Oriental writers. Mas'údí's curious explanation of this matter will be found later on.<sup>1</sup>

In one respect at least the *Sháhnáma* presents a remarkable analogy to the land of its origin: the central portion of both is a barren waste. Of the five centuries and more that intervened between the day of the death of Sikandar (Alexander the Great) and that on which Ardshír Pápakán (Artaxerxes I.) was acclaimed King of kings by his victorious troops on the battle-field of Hurmuzdagín,<sup>2</sup> that is to say between June 13th B.C. 323 and September 26th A.D. 226, Firdausí knew absolutely nothing save a few names and the semi-mythical circumstances attendant on the coming into being of the second Persian or Sásánian Empire. Consequently, for convenience sake, the period covered by the Ashkánian dynasty has come to be regarded merely as a single reign—the twenty-first in the long series of the fifty Sháhs. After all, however, this dearth of subject-matter in the core of the poem is not so complete as it seems. Firdausí took his

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 251.  
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<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 199.

authorities as he found them, and long before his days Íránian tradition already had assigned all of heroic or noteworthy that had remained in memory of Ashkánian times to the mythical epochs of the Pishdádian and Kaiánian dynasties. He spoke of the ancient tongue (Pahlavi) and of the paladins (Pahlaváns), he told at large the gests of Káran, Gúdarz, Gív, Bízhan, and others, but had no notion that he was dealing with words, names, personalities, and subject-matter, that had originated in a period dismissed by him in a few couplets as a legendary blank.<sup>1</sup> Again, apart from those heroes of secondary importance, there can be little doubt but that to the invasion of the Sacæ, which took place in Parthian times,<sup>2</sup> we owe the Personification of that warrior-race, Rustam himself, the great paladin of paladins. The importance of the Ashkánian dynasty in the provenance of the subject-matter of the Sháhnáma therefore is much greater than superficially is apparent, and if all the legendary material of the poem could be replaced in its proper setting there would be no longer such discrepancies in length and interest between this and the two preceding dynasties. Historically of course it synchronises with one of the most important periods in the world's history, that of the successors of Alexander the Great, of the Parthian dynasty, and of the dominance of Rome. No one, least of all a translator, would wish that the Sháhnáma were longer, but one may regret that the misplaced material, which so inordinately prolongs the Kaiánian dynasty, was not kept in its proper connexion in the Ashkánian. As things stand the latter is a mere prelude to the Sásánian dynasty, and is concerned with the rise to power of Ardashir Pápakán, its founder, between which and that of Cyrus the Great there is a remarkable resemblance. In both cases there had been a previous incursion of nomads which had resulted in the establishment of their supremacy in western Írán. In the first case it was the Manda who, being confounded with the Madá or true Medes,<sup>3</sup> brought about the establishment of the so-called Median Empire under which the dynasty of the Achaemenids occupied a subordinate position in Elam and Párs till the successful rebellion of Cyrus, king of Elam, against his over-lord Astyages, and his other conquests, reduced all western Asia underneath his rule. In the second case it was the Parthians, also nomads, who established a like empire over the same regions, and under whom the rulers of the house of Pápak or Sásán similarly occupied a subordinate position in Párs. As in the case of Cyrus, so Ardashir, the son of Pápak, successfully rebelled against his over-lord, and founded a great

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. iii. p. 8 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. i. p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* 17.

Persian empire. Again, the rise to power of Cyrus and Ardshir was embellished in each case by legend. In that of Cyrus two distinct accounts have come down to us, from Herodotus and Ctesias respectively. The former is that given, *mutatis mutandis*, by Firdausi in his story of the early years of Kai Khusrau,<sup>1</sup> the latter was transferred in Iránian legend from Cyrus to Ardshir as Gutschmid pointed out, who says, speaking of the fable that forms the kernel of the story :—"The hero is a Persian shepherd's son; from dreams shared by his parents the dream-interpreters predicted his future greatness; in his youth he came to the Median Court and there, through a strange fatality, has to do hard service: the crisis comes at last, and with it the flight of the hero to his home in Persis. Directly he has fled the astrologers declare that unless he be brought back in a given time he certainly will gain the kingdom, which comes to pass. This in a short sketch is the story of Ardshir; it is, however, exactly that of Cyrus, translated by Median hands but founded on Persian national sagas as given by Ctesias. The resemblance extends even to trifles: from the stable, where he has to do the most menial work, Ardshir starts on the flight which is to end in his gaining the sovereignty; at the moment when Cyrus resolves to break with Astvages he is met by a Persian slave, Hoiaras, carrying horse's dung in a basket, and that is interpreted as a good omen, horse's dung signifying riches and might (Nicolaus of Damascus, fr. 66, by Müller, iii. p. 400). So great a similarity certainly is not accidental, rather we recognise in it an old national saga transferred from the founder of the old Persian kingdom to the founder of the new."<sup>2</sup>

The Iránian version of this legend, as applied to Ardshir, is extant in the *Shāhnāma* and in a Pahlaví text very similar in provenance and character to the *Yātkār-i-Zarírān* with which we were concerned in the previous volume of this translation.<sup>3</sup> The work in question begins, after an invocation to Urmuzd, thus :—"In the history of Ardshir, son of Pápak, the following is written." The word for "history" in the original is "*kārnāmak*," which is used now as the title of the extant work, and not of the one, now lost, from which it was taken. Our extant *Kārnāmak* appears to date from the seventh century A.D., and is separable

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. ii. p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> GKS, iii. 133.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. v. p. 24. The reader may be referred to the remarks there made as to the position of such works as the above as contributories to the main stream of Iránian legend.

into portions each of which once, in all probability, formed an independent legend. Thus we have

1. The adapted Cyrus legend.
2. Ardshir's war with the Kurds.
3. The story of the Worm.
4. The two stories of Shápir.

These are strung loosely together as illustrations, each in its degree, of the process that led to the restoration of Iranian unity at the hands of Ardshir Pápakán and his immediate successors. The subject-matter of the Kárnámak corresponds with §§ 3-16 of the Ashkánians, and with §§ 1-6 of Ardshir Pápakán, but, like the Yátkár-i-Zarírán in Dakikí's case, it is not the actual authority followed by the poet but a collateral one. This is clear from the fact that it omits a very important passage given by Firdausí,<sup>1</sup> while it contains a somewhat touching episode which is not in the Sháhnáma, though it seems incredible that the poet should have made no use of it had he known it.<sup>2</sup> The episodes of the self-mutilation of Ardshir's minister,<sup>3</sup> and of the game of polo, whereby the Sháh recognised his son, also are lacking in the Kárnámak, though the polo-episode is found there in another connexion.<sup>4</sup> Other differences are due to Firdausí's more poetical and artistic way of looking at things, and to the toning down of the somewhat pronounced Zoroastrianism that appears in the Pahlaví original, but he may have found this already done in the version that he followed, which was, in all probability, that contained in the modern Persian tenth century prose Sháhnáma.<sup>5</sup> The compilers of that work seem, however, on the whole to have preferred, or at all events for the most part to have followed, the Arabic versions, and this preference is reflected in the poem.

Wherever in the following notes a comparison is instituted between the Kárnámak and Firdausí the former will be referred to as K and the latter as F.

§ 1. In the text of C this forms the concluding portion of § 40 of the previous reign. We follow the arrangement in P.

For Nasr, who is referred to again under the title of Abú'l Muzaffar just below, see Vol. i. p. 100.

At first sight there seems to be a chance here of our being able to determine at what date this passage was written, owing to Firdausí's reference to some occasion on which Mahmúd remitted a year's land-tax, but the fatality which attends all matters of date in the poem is operative even here, and there appears to be no account of this remission elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 205.    <sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 255.    <sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 261 *seq.*    <sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 257, 271 *seq.*

<sup>5</sup> See Vol. i. p. 67 *seq.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* 24, and NIN, p. 50, *note.*

§ 2. As to who the thaue (dihkán) of Chách was nothing more seems to be known.

It is the fashion of Íránian legend to connect the dynasties by means of fictitious genealogies. Accordingly the Ashkánians are represented as being descended from Kai Árash, the second son of Kai Kubád, the words Ashk and Árash being sufficiently alike to have suggested the connexion. Ashk is a word expressive of kingly virtues such as "wise," "pure," "holy." In the West it took the form of Arsaces. In the Oriental lists of the kings of the Ashkánian dynasty the other names here mentioned by Firdausí occur, sometimes more than once. There are two Ashks, one Shápiúr, several of the name of Gúdarz, one or two Bizhans, two or three Narsis, one or two of the name of Urmuzd or Hurmuz, no Árash, who perhaps is inserted in the Sháh-náma to keep up the nominal connexion with the second son of Kai Kubád, and three or four Ardawáus.<sup>1</sup> The one here mentioned by Firdausí is the last of that name, and the poet, it appears, considered that his real name was Bahrám, but in the lists there is only one so called, and he is placed much earlier. Some account of Bahrám, Gúdarz, and Bizhan, in this connexion, has been given already.<sup>2</sup>

In the last reign we had Firdausí's story of the establishment by Sikandar of the system of Part or Tribal Kings and his motives in so doing.<sup>3</sup> Though Sikandar's share in the matter is of course wholly unhistorical, the view taken in Íránian legend of the political system that obtained after his death is, broadly speaking, fairly correct. Írán never again was organised under one supreme head, as it had been in the days of the first Persian empire, till the establishment of the second empire five and a half centuries later. The death of Alexander was followed by long wars due to the rival ambitions of his generals and their descendants. Later on came wars with Rome and the rise of the Parthian power, which remained for centuries the great bulwark of the East against Roman aggression. The system of Parthian rule, however, was a nomad one. It originated in the victories of a nomad tribe, and it was to the nomads that the Parthian kings turned for succour in their hours of need. They called themselves indeed by the title of King of kings, as the Achæmenids did before them, and some of them at all events professed the same religion, but national Íránian tradition never recognised their right to use the ancient Persian title of supreme ruler though, in a sense, it was more applicable to them than to their pre-

<sup>1</sup> See the lists in GKS, iii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. iii. p. 9 *seq.*

<sup>3</sup> See p. 178 *seq.*

decessors. With the Achæmenids it was a claim to universal sovereignty, with the Arsacids a claim to the suzerainty of Írán. The geographical extent of the lands ruled by themselves, or by their governors on their behalf, was not very great, and the remainder of their empire consisted of kingdoms that retained at least a semi-independence under native rulers. Such, for instance, were the kingdoms of Osroene, Gordyene, and Atropatane (Azarbáiján) in the north, Elymais (Elam) and Párs in the south, and Sístán and Bactria in the east. Further, in the case of Párs, as we learn from Tabarí, and, we may presume, elsewhere also, these Part or Tribal Kings had under them small local kings or princes. In the days of Firdausí's Ardawán, the last Parthian Great King, there seem to have been four such rulers in Párs, one of whom was Pápak, under his immediate over-lord, the Part or Tribal King who ruled at Istakhr. Thus in Parthian times Írán was split into two great divisions, one under the Parthian Great King and organised into eighteen provinces administered by satraps directly responsible to him; the other under semi-independent potentates who held the same position with reference to their regal underlings as he held towards them. According to the Kírnámak there were in all 240 kings, according to Arab authorities there were 90,<sup>1</sup> so the Parthian over-lord was entitled to describe himself as King of kings.

§§ 3-9. Tabarí's account of the rise of the Sásánian dynasty is briefly as follows:—Ardshir was the son of Pápak, king of Khir, and was born at a village named Tíridih in the same neighbourhood. His grandfather, Sásán, was the superintendent of a Fire-temple in Istakhr. His grandmother, Sásán's wife, was of the royal house of the Báizrangí, and was named Rámbihisht. Pápak succeeded his father, and to him was born Ardshír. The king of Istakhr at that time was of the race of the Báizrangí, and his name was Gúzihr. He had a eunuch called Tírí whom he made commandant of Dárābgird. When Ardshír was seven years old his father Pápak took him to see Gúzihr, who lived at Baidá,<sup>2</sup> and asked him to allow Tírí to bring up Ardshír, who ultimately was to succeed Tírí at Dárābgird. Gúzihr assented, and Ardshír in course of time succeeded Tírí as had been arranged. For a while he remained free from ambition till it was roused in him by the predictions of astrologers and the

<sup>1</sup> NK. p. 36, and *note*.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.* "The White"—an Arabic translation of the Persian name of the hill-fort (now Bardí ?) of which a description will be found in Vol. i. p. 236, *note*, but Professor Noldeke places it only six German miles north of Shiráz. NT, p. 5, *note*.

announcement to him by an angel<sup>1</sup> in a dream, that he was destined to rule Írán. Thereupon he began to assert himself by attacking and slaying three local kings in Párs, and setting up adherents of his own in their stead. He then wrote to his father Pápak, urging him to rise against Gúzihr at Baidá. Pápak did so, slew Gúzihr, and took his crown. Then Pápak wrote to Ardawán for permission to crown his (Pápak's) son, Shápúr, with the crown of Gúzihr. Ardawán replied that Pápak and Ardshír had acted as rebels. Pápak died, his son Shápúr became king and summoned his brother Ardshír to court. Ardshír refused to come, Shápúr marched against him, but on the way to Dárábgird was killed by the fall of part of one of the buildings of Humái.<sup>2</sup> On this Ardshír went to Istakhr and, with the assent of his other brothers, became king. However, on the pretext, or in consequence, of a conspiracy on their part against him, he put many of them to death later on. He then reduced Dárábgird, where the people had taken the opportunity of his absence to rebel against him. Next he conquered the king of Kirmán, and annexed that district, of which he made one of his own sons governor. After this he slew Astawadh, a king on the coast of the Persian sea. Next he conquered Mihrak, a king in the district of Ardshír-Khurra, where he founded the town of Gúr, and, while thus engaged, received a hostile letter from Ardawán, which he answered in a similar tone, and returned to Istakhr. After this he made three distinct expeditions from Párs. In the first he subdued Ispahán, Ahwáz, a district on the small Tigris,<sup>3</sup> and other places. In the second he went to Ahwáz by way of Gírih and Kázirún and on to Maishán where he built the town of Karakh-Maishán. In the third he encountered Ardawán at Hurmuzdagín, slew him, and the same day was hailed King of kings. The date of this battle seems to have been September 26th, A.D. 226, but the actual site, according to Professor Noldeke, is unknown, and he is of the opinion that the three expeditions of Ardshír from Párs, mentioned above, correspond with the three battles that, according to Western writers, took place before Ardawán was disposed of for good and all.<sup>4</sup> The plain of Rám Hurmuz, south of Shúshtar, has been suggested as the probable scene of the decisive battle.<sup>5</sup>

§ 3. In the Sháh-náma the Sásánian dynasty is connected with the Kaianian by a double genealogy, one already given under

<sup>1</sup> No doubt, as Professor Noldeke suggests, Surúsh in the original Pahlaví. NT, 6, and *note*.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. v. p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> The Káirún.

<sup>4</sup> NT, pp. 1-15, and *notes*. Cf. RSM, 35 *seq.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

the reign of Bahman,<sup>1</sup> the other here. Both are fictitious, Tabarí's account making it clear with regard to the latter that Ardshir was the son, not the grandson on the female side only, of Pápak.<sup>2</sup> In Tabarí also two genealogies are given, both of which serve to connect the line of Pápak with the Káinians. They run as follow :—<sup>3</sup>

I	II
Kai Manush (Minúchihir ?)	Luhrásp
Kai Ugi (?)	Gushtásp
Luhrásp	Asfandiyár
Gushtásp	Bahman
Asfandiyár	Sásán
Bahman	Biháfridh
Sásán	Zarír
Mihrmās	Pápak
Pápak	Sásán
Sásán	Pápak
Pápak	Ardshir
Sásán	
Pápak	
Ardshir	

Two similar genealogies, tracing back the line of Ardshir to Luhrásp, are given by Mas'údí.<sup>4</sup> Neither he nor Tabarí credits the legends, found in the Kárnámak and in the Sháhnáma, that Sásán was a shepherd in the employment of Pápak, who adopted him and gave him a daughter in marriage. In Firdausí Pápak is called the son of Rúdyáb, but as the poet makes that name a rhyme-word it is open to suspicion apart from the fact that it does not appear in any of the above-mentioned genealogies. The same reason, probably, led Firdausí (F) to put the visit of the master of the herds (ramah) to Pápak in the winter-season (damah)—a touch not found in the Kárnámak (K). In K Pápak has three dreams. The first of them, in which he sees the sun

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. v. p. 290.

<sup>2</sup> NT, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 198.

<sup>4</sup> MM, ii. 151.



illuminating the whole world from the head of Sásán, is not in F. In K too the three Fires are Frúbá, representing the priestly class, Gushasp, the warrior-class, and Mihr Barzin, the agricultural.<sup>1</sup> The sending of Sásán to the bath, doubtlessly a very necessary preliminary, is not in the more primitive K.

§ 4. Ardawán, the Artabanus III. or IV. of Western writers, the last ruler of the Parthian dynasty, was regarded in Persian historical tradition as being himself the chief Tribal or Part King, the *primus inter pares*, not as the general suzerain, and as having Media Magna as his territory. Hence F assigns him Rai as his capital.<sup>2</sup>

K adds chess to the accomplishments learnt by Ardshir at Court, but F tells us further on, under the reign of Núshírwán, the story of its introduction into Persia.

The present of money that accompanied Papak's reply to Ardshir is not mentioned in K.

§ 5. The details of the slave-girl's descent by means of a lasso in order to visit Ardshir, and her name, are not in K, which omits too the mention of Papak's death and Ardawán's appointment of a successor, and makes Ardawán the Part King over Ispahán, Párs, and the neighbouring lands, and Papak himself the prince of Párs.<sup>3</sup>

The account of the astrologers working out their calculations in the house of the slave-girl, and her over-hearing them, is lacking in K, which gives no reason for her knowledge in the matter. On the other hand the pronouncements of the astrologers are more elaborate and technical in K, where also they state that the servant who escapes from his master in the course of the next three days will supplant him.<sup>4</sup>

§ 6. In K the fugitives arrive at a village, where they are afraid to stop, and are met by two women who tell Ardshir to fear not, and to hasten to the sea where he will be safe. In F the fugitives reach a pool where they want to drink and rest, but are warned by two young men to hasten on. In K Ardawán thrice in the course of his pursuit inquires of those whom he meets as to how far the fugitives are ahead. On the third occasion it is a caravan that he comes upon. F omits the caravan passage.

For the mountain-sheep see Vol. i. p. 374.

§ 7. F is more detailed here. In K the corresponding passage runs thus:—"Then he (Ardawán) sent an equipped army to Párs,

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. pp. 7, 130, 132.

<sup>3</sup> NK, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> NT, p. 7, note.

<sup>4</sup> NK, i. 42. Cf. p. 195.

under his own son, to take Ardshír prisoner.<sup>1</sup> In the meanwhile Ardshír went his way to the coast. As he proceeded, some of the men of Párs, who were hostile to Ardawán, handed over to him goods and chattels and their own persons, and promised him fealty and obedience."<sup>2</sup>

The city founded by Ardshír was called Rív-Ardshír.<sup>3</sup>

§ 8. In K we have Banák of Ispahán with six sons for the Tabák of Jahram with seven sons of F. The Persian for "seven" comes in handily as a rhyme-word; hence the change. In K it is stated that Ardshír called the district where he first met Banák "Rámishn-i-Ardshír," i.e. "Joy of Ardshír," and founded a city there of the same name and also known as "Rám Ardshír," i.e. "Happy Ardshír."<sup>4</sup> It was natural that he should, or be thought to, have founded a Fire-temple there, and this may be the origin of F's Rám in that connexion.

The account of Ardshír's battle with Bahman, son of Ardawán, is not in K.

§ 9. Firdausí's description of this battle is in his usual style. The corresponding passage in K may be read to indicate three battles or campaigns.<sup>5</sup> It runs as follows:—"Then he (Ardshír) began war with Ardawán, slaughtered his whole army, and took from him his goods and chattels, houses, and property. Then he settled in Istakhr, and assembled from Kirmán, Makrán, Ispahán, and the different regions of Párs, a very great host. Then he began another war with Ardawán. For four months there were daily much fighting and slaughter. Ardawán collected from various regions—Rai, Damáwand, Dilamán,<sup>6</sup> and Patash-wárgar<sup>7</sup>—armies and horses; but as the Majesty of the Kaiánians had descended on Ardshír he was successful, killed Ardawán, and all his possessions came into Ardshír's hands. He took Ardawán's daughter to wife and went back to Párs."<sup>8</sup>

§§ 10, 11. Here we have the account of an "unfortunate incident," and shall meet, later on, with others that befell Ardshír after his triumph over Ardawán. He still had to fight hard to make good the title of "King of kings" conferred on him by his troops on the field of Hurmuzdagín.<sup>9</sup> Naturally this would be so. A dynasty that had endured for centuries could not fail to have many adherents and dependants; Ardawán had left sons; Chosroes, the king of Armenia, was either his brother or at

<sup>1</sup> According to F Ardawán's eldest son, Bahman, was established already as ruler in Párs. See p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> NK, p. 46. <sup>3</sup> NT, p. 19, and *note*. <sup>4</sup> NK, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. p. 199. <sup>6</sup> Gilán.

<sup>7</sup> Tabaristán or Mázandaijn.

<sup>8</sup> NK, p. 47, and *notes*.

<sup>9</sup> See p. 199.

all events had been set on the throne by him; the Part Kings too had everything to lose by Ardashir's success, for it was manifest that he had no intention of leaving them in the semi-independent position that they had enjoyed under Parthian suzerainty; his view with regard to them was, as we have seen already, that "stone dead hath no fellow."<sup>1</sup> Ardashir followed up his success over Ardawān by striking at the heart of that king's power which, according to Irānian tradition, lay in Media, and here is recorded for us in the account of his expedition against the Kurds, by whom the people of Media are meant, for in K the name of the Kurd king is Mīdik, which simply means "the Mede."<sup>2</sup> These, so far as Media Magna was concerned, Ardashir seems to have conquered, but Tabari's statement that he subdued Azarbāijān and Armenia appears to be an exaggeration. The case of Azarbāijān is doubtful, but Armenia, whither some of the Arsacid princes had fled for refuge, succeeded with the help of Rome in maintaining its independence.<sup>3</sup>

§§ 12-16. To the exegesis of this strange story, as Firdausi calls it, three great authorities—Mohl, Darmesteter, and Noldeke—have contributed. The two latter see reason to connect it with other more ancient Indo-European myths of dragons, such as Indra with Vritra, Apollo with the Python, &c., and Darmesteter quotes an interesting Scandinavian parallel which he considers more primitive and unaffected by industrialism:—"Le comte Herraudr a donné à sa fille, la belle Thora, un serpent qu'il a trouvé dans un œuf de vautour. Le serpent plait à Thora qui lui fait un lit d'or dans un coffret. Le serpent grandit, *l'or grandit avec lui*, le coffre devient trop étroit pour lui, et même la maison de la jeune fille qu'il enveloppe de son corps. Il était méchant et malicieux: nul n'osait l'approcher que l'homme qui lui apportait chaque jour sa nourriture, consistant en un bœuf entier. Le comte promet sa fille et l'or à qui tuera le dragon. Ragnar, âgé de quinze ans, se fait un vêtement garni de poix (pour se garder du poison du serpent), surprend le monstre et le tue de la pointe de son épieu qu'il lui laisse dans la gueule. Il se retire sans dire son nom et plus tard se fait reconnaître publiquement au manche de son épieu: il reçoit Thora en mariage."<sup>4</sup>

Still more to the point are Mohl's explanation and illustration, which are as follow:—"Je suis disposé à croire que ce conte est un vague souvenir de l'introduction du ver à soie en Perse et de la prospérité que cette nouvelle industrie devait avoir répandue. On me permettra peut-être de citer à l'appui de cette supposition

<sup>1</sup> See p. 199.

<sup>2</sup> NK, p. 48, and *note*.

<sup>3</sup> NT, p. 15, and *note*. Cf. RSM, p. 37 *seq.* <sup>4</sup> DEI, ii. 83.

un conte analogue et presque aussi étrange, qui date de nos jours. Je me rappelle avoir vu, il y a une trentaine d'années, au ministère du commerce, un rapport du préfet d'un des départements de la Bretagne au sujet de la détresse que répandait dans la campagne l'introduction du fil de lin produit par les machines, et de la difficulté que les fileuses à la main trouvaient à lutter contre cette concurrence. Le préfet raconte, à cette occasion, que ces pauvres femmes avaient fini par composer une légende, selon laquelle il y avait une fée, appelée *Machine*, qui avait sept doigts d'acier et pouvait ainsi filer plus et plus vite qu'elles ne pouvaient le faire avec leurs cinq doigts humains."<sup>1</sup>

The full process of silk manufacture from the worm (*Bombyx mori*) to the finished fabric was known in China from time immemorial, and the secret was guarded very carefully. Long before the Christian era the raw silk had begun to be imported into Europe, and a famous manufactory for weaving it was established in the island of Cos in the Ægean Sea. The secret of the method of the production of the raw material itself was kept till much later times, sufficiently, at all events, for the maintenance of the Chinese monopoly, though Aristotle in his *History of Animals*, Bk. V., ch. xvii., sec. 6, ed. Schneider, speaks of a certain great worm with horns, as it were, which produces bombycina or cocoons which the women use in weaving. Aristotle's knowledge probably came to him as one of the results of Alexander's expedition to the East. The silk-worm itself, of which the secret had spread during the fourth century A.D. through India to Iran and the West, was brought for the first time into Europe by two Persian monks, at the special request of the Emperor Justinian, in A.D. 550. They smuggled the eggs from China in the hollow of a bamboo, and thus founded the Western silk industry. Justinian's object was to break the monopoly of the silk-trade then, by land and sea alike, in Persian hands.<sup>2</sup>

Two reasons may be suggested why the scene of our story was laid on the shores of the Persian sea. One is that a Part King of that region, *i.g.* of Hurmuz (Ormuz), may have grown rapidly rich in the latter days of the Parthian dynasty by means of the silk or cotton trade of the Persian Gulf, and suffered for his prosperity at the hands of Ardashir Pāpakān. The other is to be found in the popular etymology of the word Kirmān—a region

<sup>1</sup> P, Vol. v., Préface.

<sup>2</sup> See GDF. v. 56 *seq.*; *Ency. Brit.*, 11th ed. s.v. "Silk"; and SP, pp. 179, 263.

more famous for its date (khurmá) than for its silk. In Persian, however, it so happens that "kirm" means "worm," and in fact is the same word. Kirmán was supposed to mean "The Land of the Worm," and thus to be a suitable scene for some ancient Dragon-myth,<sup>1</sup> or a story may have been invented to account for the name. Both in K and F, it should be noted, Ardashir, after killing the Worm, proceeds to conquer Kirmán, so that we have the romantic and historic accounts of the same event put side by side, the former given at large and the latter very shortly. In Tabarí too we have the historic version and two brief rationalised versions of the romantic side of the story. He informs us that Ardashir subdued Kirmán, slew its king Balash (Vologeses, an Arsacid), and made his own son ruler. This is represented as taking place before the war with Ardawán. Then (here begins one of the romantic versions) he went against a king named Astawadh, who lived on the coast of the Persian sea, and to whom divine honours were paid, killed him, cut him in two with his sword, slew also his retinue, and brought out from his treasure-house, and carried off, much treasure that was stored there.<sup>2</sup> Astawadh, Professor Noldeke notes, is a corruption by misreading of the Pahlavi name,<sup>3</sup> which becomes Haftwád in the *Sháhnáma*. According to the other account there was in Alár, a village in the province of Kuján, which belonged to the coast-land of Ardashir-Khurra (Gúr), a queen who enjoyed divine honours and possessed great wealth and many soldiers. Ardashir, toward the end of his reign, killed the queen and captured much gold and treasure which she had.<sup>4</sup>

In these accounts divine honours are transferred, in the first, from the dragon to Haftwád and, in the second, to his daughter.

§ 12. This passage is not found elsewhere, but there is no reason to assume that the poet invented, though very likely he embellished, it. From what we can gather of Firdausi's literary methods, he would not have introduced such a string of incidents without authority for so doing. When "gravelled for lack of matter," he does not "take occasion to" invent, but passes on as we see in the case of the present dynasty, where he had an unequalled opportunity for the exercise of his imagination had he been disposed to avail himself of it. The absence of the passage in the *Kármák* and in the Arabic may be accounted for easily. In the former, Haftwád (*Haftánbúkht*) is introduced quite abruptly,<sup>5</sup> and the story of his rise to power was omitted not

<sup>1</sup> DEI, ii. 81.

<sup>2</sup> NT, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 206.

<sup>4</sup> N1, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> "But the army of Haftánbúkht, the lord of the Worm, attacked him (Ardshir)," &c. ; NK, p. 49.

because it was well known or unknown, but because it was foreign to the purpose in hand, which was to show by what steps Ardshir rose to supreme power, effected the unification of Írán, and founded a new dynasty. From this point of view the destruction of Haftwád and the Worm was of importance, but not their genesis. In the latter we have a much more drastic system of lopping in the interests, apparently, of rationalism. In the second of Tabari's versions we get a hint that it was the one which, in its unrationalised state, Firdausí followed. The queen there is the daughter here.

The name of Ardshír's opponent in K—Haftánbúkht, which does not scan—becomes Haftwád in F, as it may be so read in the Pahlaví if the central letters are omitted. Haftánbúkht, according to Professor Nöldeke, means "The Seven have redeemed" with reference to the seven planets which, as creations of Áhriman<sup>1</sup> might be expected, from the orthodox Zoroastrian point of view, to watch over the fortunes of Haftánbúkht and the Worm. In Professor Darmesteter's opinion, however, Firdausí's etymology is correct, though based on a misapprehension. The word "wád" was due to a misreading of the Pahlaví, but the word "búkht" does mean "son," and the seven sons are the sevenfold coils, or the seven heads, of the dragon. Both agree that in the original form of the story Haftánbúkht was the dragon.<sup>2</sup>

According to K, Haftánbúkht's seat was at Gulár in Kujárán. In Tabari, Haftánbúkht becomes Astawadh, and Gulár, in the version which substitutes a queen for a king, becomes Alár.<sup>3</sup> The situation of Kujárán is unknown.

In K the food of the dragon is the blood of sheep and bullocks,<sup>4</sup> not rice, milk, and honey, as in F.

§ 13. In K the army of Haftánbúkht is represented as the aggressor. The forces of Ardshír, who is not present, are attacked after his return from his victory over the Kurds. This preliminary engagement is omitted by F. Haftwád's son crossed over from Arabia to help his father.<sup>5</sup> The water behind Ardshír was probably the sea, but the Persian word is a vague one.

§ 14. In K the older form Mithrak is preserved. According to Tabari, who places Ardshír's war with him before the defeat of Ardawán, he lived in a district of Ardshír-Khurra."<sup>6</sup>

§ 15. In K Ardshír, after his defeat by Haftánbúkht, reaches the shore of the sea quite alone and almost abandoned by the

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. NK, pp. 29, 49, and *note*; DEI, ii. 82.

<sup>3</sup> NK, p. 50; NT, pp. 10, 19. <sup>4</sup> NK, p. 56. <sup>5</sup> *Id.* 49-52, and *notes*.

<sup>6</sup> NT, p. 11.

divine Grace, but then it stood in front of him and led him out of danger to the village where the two brothers, named Burjak and Burjátur, dwelt.<sup>1</sup>

In K Ardshir gets admitted into the castle with the two young men of the village only. In F he takes seven men with him. Seven is a favourite number in Persian story, and if, as we have seen above, one of the legends told of Cyrus the Great could be transferred to Ardshir, there seems no reason why a fragment of the legend of the Seven, who made the famous expedition against the stronghold of the mage Gaumata—the false Smerdis—in the days of Darius Hystaspis, should not be transferred here in like manner.<sup>2</sup> In K Ardshir appoints, for some reason not clear to us, the 27th day of the month as the one for decisive action, and Haftánbúkht appears to have perished in the fight, not afterwards by formal execution as in F.<sup>3</sup>

## § I

### *The Praise of Mahmúd*

Now be the monarch of the world our theme  
As one in feast and fight and lore supreme—  
The great Mahmúd ; much prosperous rede hath he  
And doth uphold the fame of majesty,  
A king, Abú'l Kásim ! most sage and wise  
Beyond e'en wisdom in his policies.  
Glad be his heart for evermore and free  
From toil and trouble. King of kings is he  
Both of Írán and of Zábulistán,  
And from Kannúj <sup>4</sup> up to Kábulistán.  
On him, upon the troops of his command,  
On his allies, his kindred, and his land,  
On that world-lord and chief, Nasr the amír,  
A source of joyance to time's circling sphere,  
Be praise, while o'er the moon the army's head  
Ascendeth by Abú'l Muzaffar led ;

<sup>1</sup> NK, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. i. p. 58 ; DHA, vi. 201 *seq.*

<sup>3</sup> NK, p. 56. and *note.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vol. i. p. 99.

By fortune and by name victorious he,  
 Whose arrows in their flight out-top the tree.  
 Oh! may the Sháh live scathless evermore,  
 And be his seat upon his treasury's store,  
 And may his general be happy too,  
 In heart illumed, in treasure well to do.  
 Thus while revolving heaven maintain its place  
 Ne'er may its love be severed from this race,  
 But be it ever a victorious one,  
 And crowned from sire to sire and son to son.  
 Upon this day, the fourteenth of Shawwál,  
 May benediction on our sovereign fall  
 For this good news about the tax—that he,  
 The Sháh with Grace and crown, hath made decree  
 To claim no contribution for a year  
 From men of ardent Faith and godly fear.  
 The age of Núshírwán hath come anew,  
 And all hath been transfigured to our view.  
 When on this wise no little time hath sped,  
 And when the robe of right shall be outspread,  
 Thou'lt see him (such his justice and his love!)  
 Receive the robe of honour from above—  
 One that upon him ne'er will wear away,  
 While on his head the imperial crown will stay.  
 May his head flourish, harm approach not near,  
 His magnanimity transcend heaven's sphere.  
 One telling o'er the years and months that I  
 Have lived will not despise my prophecy.  
 Look well, because this book a flag will be  
 O'er sages' heads to all eternity,  
 And, in original, will seem to spring  
 From Gaiúmart whose praise all people sing.  
 Thus Núshírwán, son of Kubád, once said:—  
 "When any monarch turn from right his head  
 Heaven will black out the patent of his reign,  
 The stars acclaim him not as king again.



Injustice is the notice to depart  
To kings that vex the blameless to the heart.”<sup>1</sup>

For ever may this family, endued  
With worth, with wisdom, and with rectitude,  
Continue. Lasting foothold here hath none,  
But his good name will last when he is gone.  
Where now are Farídún, Zakhák, Jamshíd,  
The chiefs of Arab and of Persian breed ?  
Where are the great of the Sásánians,  
Those of Bahráw’s race, and the Ashkánians ?  
Zakhák the Sháh was most reviled, for he  
Was all injustice and impurity,  
While glorious Farídún approval won :  
He died, and his renown still liveth on.  
In this world fame is our memorial—  
A better thing than gems imperial !  
The man unjust, whose joyance was in throne  
And treasure, never hath made praise his own .  
His reputation in the world is naught,  
And none is fain to pleasure him in aught.  
Because of our foe-quelling king’s decree  
May he still throne it in felicity.  
Forth from their homes the people plain-ward hied,  
With praise transcending heaven, and thus they cried :—  
“ Aye may he live, the crowned head of our state,  
And may time’s course to him prove fortunate ;  
Here may he look on naught save what doth please,  
His name be graven on the palaces.  
And may our benisons withal embrace  
His kin, host, land, his royal form, and face.”

<sup>1</sup> Similar sentiments were attributed to Ardshír Pápakán. See p. 283.

## § 2

*The Tribal Kings*

C. 1364 O thou that singest in extreme old age!  
 Now let the Ashkánians' times thy thoughts engage.  
 What hath the author of the history  
 Still left to tell us from the legendry?  
 What mighty chieftains hath he to enthrone  
 Upon the world, Sikandar being gone?

The thane of Chách, mine author, saith that none  
 Thenceforward had the throne and crown, but princes,  
 Brave, headstrong, proud, and scions of Árash,  
 Each in his corner made himself a realm  
 Out of some portion of the provinces,  
 And when they sat rejoicing on their thrones  
 Folk called them "Tribal Kings." Two centuries  
 passed,  
 And thou hadst said: "There is no Sháh." These  
 princes

Regarded not each other, and earth rested,  
 Sikandar having ordered matters thus,  
 To guard the land of Rúm. The first was Ashk,  
 Sprung from Kubád, while others were Shápúr,  
 A royal warrior, Gúdarz the Ashkánian,  
 Bízhan of Kaian lineage, Narsí,  
 The great Urmuzd, Árash a warrior famed,  
 And after him the noble Ardawán,  
 Wise, prudent, and of ardent soul, for when  
 Bahráh, the Ashkánian, sat upon the throne  
 He lavished treasure on the poor, but folk  
 Were wont to call him Ardawán<sup>1</sup> the Great  
 Because he kept the wolf's claws from the sheep.  
 He governed in Shíráz and Ispahán,

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* arta=great, and wán or bán=a guardian.

Which scholars call the "Marches of the princes."  
 He set up in Istakhr Pápak<sup>1</sup> as ruler,  
 Whose thumb-stall used to make the monsters<sup>2</sup> yell.  
 How all these princes perished, root and branch,  
 Their time-worn chronicle narrateth not.  
 Naught have I heard of them except the name,  
 And in the Book of Kings seen but the same.

## § 3

*How Pápak saw Sásán in a Dream and gave him a  
 Daughter in Marriage*

Now when Dára had perished in the war, C. 1365  
 And all his family had had their day,  
 He left one son behind—a potent prince,  
 A wise and valiant man by name Sásán.  
 Who, when he saw his father slain, and fortune  
 Averse from the Íránians, fled before  
 The host of Rúm and 'scaped the net of bale.  
 He died in wretched plight in Hindústán,  
 And left a little boy. Thus every sire  
 Throughout four generations gave his son  
 The name Sásán. They all were camel-drivers,  
 Or shepherds, and hard workers all their years.  
 The youngest of the race came to Pápak,  
 Beheld his master-shepherd on the plain,  
 And said: "Hast thou employment for a hireling,  
 Whose life is being spent in sore distress?"  
 The master-shepherd took that luckless one,  
 And worked him day and night. His industry

<sup>1</sup> In the text the Arabic form of the word "Bábak" is used, but the proper Persian form is Pápak, which we have adopted throughout.

<sup>2</sup> The word is the same as that used in the previous reign to describe the monsters on which Yájúj and Májúj fattened in the spring. See p. 164.

Found favour, and he rose to be chief shepherd.

Pápak, son of Rúdyáb, one night thus dreamed :—  
 He saw upon a mighty elephant  
 Sásán and in his hand a Indian sword,  
 While all that came to him saluted him.  
 And did him homage ; he addressed them kindly,  
 And purged their gloomy hearts of grief. Next night,  
 When sleeping much perturbed, he dreamed about  
 Fire-worshippers who bore three blazing Fires,  
 Such as Ázargashasp, Kharrád, and Mihr,<sup>1</sup>  
 Bright as Sol. Mars, and Venus ; all blazed up  
 Before Sásán, their fuel aloe-wood.

Pápak awoke, his soul and heart possessed  
 By care. Those skilled in dreams and in that lore  
 Puissant, magnates, sages, counsellors,  
 Assembled in the palace of Pápak,  
 And as he set forth what had chanced, and told  
 His dreams to them at large, the adviser mused,  
 The interpreter gave ear, and in the end  
 Said : “O exalted king ! this must be scanned,  
 For one whom thou beheldest thus in sleep  
 Will raise his head above the sun as Sháh,  
 Or, if the dream be not of him, his son  
 Will have the world.”

Pápak rejoiced on hearing,  
 Rewarded each according to his rank,  
 Then bade his master-shepherd to forsake  
 The flock and come. It was a winter's day.  
 Wrapped in his cloak, its wool was thick with snow,  
 His heart with fears, he came in haste. Pápak  
 Dismissed all strangers, slave and counsellor  
 Went, and he graciously received Sásán,  
 Assigning him a seat beside his lord,  
 And asked him of his quality and birth.  
 The herd, through terror of him, answered not,

<sup>1</sup> The names of Fire-temples.

But said at last: "O prince! if thou wilt give  
A promise to respect thy shepherd's life  
I will inform thee of my quality  
When thou shalt grasp my hand and pledge thyself  
To harm me not in public or in private."

Pápak, on hearing this, loosed his own tongue,  
Invoked the Giver of all good, and said:—  
"I will not harm but make thee glad and honoured,"

Then spake the youth: "I am, O paladin!  
Son of Sásán and sprung from Sháh Ardshír,  
Whom chroniclers call by the name Bahman,  
The great son of the brave Asfandiyár,  
Who was Gushtásp's memorial."

Pápak

Wept from those shrewd eyes that had seen the dream,  
Then brought the raiment of a paladin,  
And steed with royal trappings, saying thus:—  
"Go to the bath what while they fetch fresh raiment."

He raised Sásán o'er that chief shepherdship,  
Prepared for him a noble residence,  
And, having lodged him there, provided slaves,  
Both boys and girls, to wait on him, bestowed  
Addition by all means, set him past need  
Of wealth, then gave the Crown on his own brows—  
A daughter well beloved—to him as spouse.

#### § 4

*How Ardshír Pápakán was born, and of his Case with  
Ardaván*

When nine months had elapsed the beauteous dame  
Brought forth an infant like the radiant sun,  
The image of illustrious Ardshír,  
A growing, glorious, heart-delighting child.  
His sire withal, who joyed to gaze upon him,

Named him Ardashír and fostered him through all  
 His years of need. A long while thus elapsed.  
 (The learned now call him Pápakán Ardashír.<sup>1</sup>)  
 They taught him all accomplishment, wherein  
 He bettered e'en the promise of his birth.  
 He was so wise and goodly that the sky,  
 Thou wouldst have said, was luminous through him.  
 News of the youth's intelligence and knowledge  
 Reached Ardawán: "He is a savage Lion  
 In fight," it ran, "and like Náhíd in feast."

The king wrote to that famous paladin.  
 Pápak, and said: "O counsellor of mine,  
 Wise, trusty, eloquent. and good! thy son,  
 Ardashír, is, I have heard, a cavalier  
 Of eloquence and heed. On reading this  
 Be pleased to send him unto us forthwith.  
 I will supply his every want, advance him  
 Among the chiefs and, when he is associate  
 With mine own sons, deny him not my kinship."

Pápak, on reading this, wept tears of blood;  
 He bade a writer, and that rising youth,  
 Ardashír, attend, and said: "Peruse this letter  
 Of Ardawán's and let thy clear mind scan it;  
 Behold, I write an answer to the king,  
 And send it by some friend to this effect:—  
 'Lo! I have sent to thee a gallant youth.  
 One much approved, who is my heart and eyes,  
 And whom I have advised. When he shall come  
 To thy high court treat him right royally,  
 And suffer not the blast to blow upon him.'"

Then swift as wind he oped the treasury-doors,  
 And gratified the youth with various gifts  
 Of golden harness, swords, and iron maces;  
 There was not aught that he refused the boy.

<sup>1</sup> He is generally known as Ardashír Pápakán, i.e. Ardashír of the family of Pápak.

The treasurer brought forth brocade, *dínárs*,  
Steeds, slaves, with stuffs of *Chín* and cloth of gold,  
Such as kings wear, and gave them to the youth  
What time he went to wait on *Ardawán*.  
The favoured youth, departing from his grandsire,  
Went to the court of *Ardawán* at *Rai*,  
Who, hearing of his coming, graciously  
Received him, spake at large about *Pápak*,  
Assigned *Ardshír* a place beside the throne, C. 1368  
Lodged him near by, fed, clothed, and furnished him.  
Now when the sun sat on its throne, and when  
The world became fair as a *Rúman's* face,  
*Ardshír* called for a servant and therewith  
The gifts of obligation, and dispatched  
The envoy of *Pápak*, the paladin,  
To *Ardawán*, the king, who viewed the gifts:  
They pleased him, and the young man profited  
Thereby: the monarch held him as a son.  
A while passed well with him. The twain consorted  
In revel, feast, and at the chase.

One day

It happened that the escort of the king,  
And his own sons, were scattered in the chase.  
*Ardshír* himself attended *Ardawán*,  
Who found that gallant youth acceptable.  
Now *Ardawán* had four sons of his own,  
Each king-like. Onager had come in sight,  
And that great company was all astir.  
They urged their wind-foot steeds and mixed the dust  
With sweat. *Ardshír* pressed on in front and, nearing  
The quarry, placed an arrow on his bow,  
And struck an onager upon the haunch.  
The arrow-point and feather went right through.  
Anon came *Ardawán* who, when he saw  
The strength of that young archer, cried: "May he  
That shot possess a soul to match his hand."

Ardshír replied: "I shot the onager."  
 A son said: "It was I that brought it down,  
 And I am looking out for one to match it."

Ardshír retorted: "Well the plain is broad,  
 And there are onagers and arrows too.  
 By that same token slay another such:  
 It is a sin for noble men to lie."

Now Ardawán was angry with Ardshír  
 Thereat and roared at him: "Mine is the blame,  
 Because this bringing up is all mine own.  
 Why should I have thee in my company.  
 Both in the banquet and the hunting-field.  
 In order that thou mayst surpass my sons,  
 And show off thine address and excellence?  
 Begone. See to mine Arab steeds and choose  
 C.,1369 A handy residence. Be stable-master,  
 And keep all companies."

Ardshír in tears  
 Went to be keeper of the Arab steeds,  
 And in his wretchedness and discontent  
 Wrote to his grandsire thus: "In what a way  
 Hath Ardawán dealt with us! Anguish take  
 His body, care his soul."

He told the matter,  
 And why king Ardawán was wroth with him.  
 Papak was troubled when the letter came,  
 But held his peace, and from his treasury  
 Dispatched ten thousand to his son in gold  
 By camel and by cavalier, commanded  
 A scribe to come, and wrote: "O foolish boy!  
 When thou wast hunting game with Ardawán  
 Why didst thou pass his sons although thou art  
 His servant, not his kin? He wronged thee not  
 In malice; 'twas thine own insensate deed.  
 Now strive to make him pleased and satisfied,  
 And do his will in all. I have dispatched thee



Gold and this letter of advice withal.  
 When thou hast spent the money ask for more  
 Until the times shall change."

The dromedary

Sped with the ancient veteran to Ardshír,  
 Who when he read the letter was content.  
 And plotted and dissembled, chose a lodging  
 Near to his steeds, though one not worthy of him,  
 Provided it with carpets, food, and raiment,  
 And spent his days and nights in revelry,  
 Companioning with wine and minstrelsy.<sup>1</sup>

## § 5

*How Ardawán's Slave-girl fell in Love with Ardshír and  
 how he fled with her to Párs*

Now Ardawán possessed a lofty palace,  
 Wherein there dwelt a favourite slave of his.  
 She was a Moon-face hight Gulnár<sup>2</sup>—a picture  
 All jewelry and colour and perfume.  
 She ministered to Ardawán and kept  
 His treasury. He loved her more than life.  
 And joyed and smiled to look on her.<sup>3</sup> One day,  
 When she had mounted to the palace-roof,  
 And gladdened at that mirth,<sup>4</sup> she saw Ardshír;  
 His lips were smiling, and he won her heart.  
 She waited till the eve or rather night,  
 Then tied a lasso to the battlements  
 With many a knot. She proved it with her hand,<sup>5</sup>  
 And then, invoking Him who giveth good,  
 Descended boldly. When in all her gems,

C. 1370

<sup>1</sup> Following the division of the text in P.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.* Pomegranate-bloom.

<sup>3</sup> In C the section ends here.

<sup>4</sup> See above.

<sup>5</sup> "la lança avec sa main" (Mohl).

And savouring musk and other spicery,  
 She reached Ardshír she raised his head, which lay  
 Upon the pillow of brocade, and clasped him,  
 When he was wakened, tightly to her breast.  
 The young man marked that lovely one, her face,  
 Her hair, and scented bravery, and said :—  
 “Whence hast thou sprung to grace my troubled heart?”

“A slave am I and love thee, heart and soul,”  
 She answered. “I am Ardawán’s beloved,  
 His treasurer, his darling, and delight,  
 But, if thou wilt accept me, thy slave now  
 To live but in thy sight and visit thee,  
 Whene’er thou wilt, and brighten thy dark days.”

A while passed thus and then mishap befell  
 Ardshír’s inspirer. Veteran, shrewd Pápak  
 Died and resigned this ancient home to others.  
 When news reached Ardawán he sorrowed much;  
 His soul grew dark. The chiefs all asked for Párs,  
 But he bestowed it on his eldest son,<sup>1</sup>  
 Bade bring the drums and march forth to the waste.  
 As for Ardshír the world gloomed to his heart  
 For his protector’s sake, old, shrewd Pápak.  
 He loathed his service under Ardawán,  
 And, when those tidings came, formed new designs,  
 For he was rash through grief and fain to flee.

Anon king Ardawán brought to his court  
 Some shrewd men of the readers of the stars  
 To learn his future, to direct his course,  
 And find whom fortune would inspire thereafter.  
 C. 1371 He sent them to the mansion of Gulnár  
 To make their observations of the stars.  
 They worked for three days at his horoscope,  
 The treasurers could hear the talk thereon  
 And other secrets, and spent all the days  
 And three-fourths of the night in listening

<sup>1</sup> Bahman, as we learn later on, pp. 225 *seq.*. 259.

With longing heart and sighs upon her lips,  
But very mindful of each word that passed.  
Upon the fourth day these shrewd men set out  
To tell the secrets to king Ardawān,  
And with their magic tablets at their breasts  
Went to him from the damsel's dwelling-place.  
They told the secrets of the lofty sky,  
To whom it turned the time, and the degree :—  
“A thing will happen at no distant date—  
A matter that will wring the monarch's heart.  
The least among his magnates will take flight,  
A chieftain of high birth, a warrior,  
And afterward become a mighty king,  
A world-lord fortunate and fortune-giving.”  
The heart of that renowned and prosperous prince  
Was in great dudgeon at their words.

The damsel.

When all was black as pitch, went to Ardshír.  
That youth was troubled like the sea and could not  
Rest for one day because of Ardawān.  
She told him what those shrewd men had apprised  
The famous king, whereat Ardshír grew calm  
And silent yet his heart was moved thereat.  
He thought of flight and asked : “If I quit Rai  
And seek Írán, the country of the brave.  
Consider whether thou wilt go with me.  
Or tarry with the king. If thou wilt go  
Thou shalt be great, the Crown of all the realm.”

She said with many a sigh and bitter tears :—  
“Thy slave am I, and death alone shall part us.”

Ardshír replied : “We must escape to-morrow,”  
And she went back resolved to risk her all.

As soon as earth was gilded by the sun,  
And dark night had been taken in the noose,  
She oped the treasury and made her choice  
Among the royal gems, took what dinárs

C. 1372

She needed, went back to her home, and there  
 Secured the jewels, waited till the night  
 Rose o'er the hills, till Ardawán was sleeping,  
 The coast all clear, then quitting arrow-like  
 The palace, took the jewels to Ardshír.  
 She found the atheling with cup in hand,  
 And all the equeries in drunken sleep.  
 He had picked out two noble steeds, and these  
 Were feeding ready saddled in their stalls.  
 When he beheld Gulnár. the gold, and rubies,  
 He laid the cup aside and forthwith bridled  
 The Arab steeds, put on his armour, mounted,  
 And grasped a watered sword. The lady rode  
 The other steed, and so they fled together  
 Toward Párs with gladsome hearts.

Now Ardawán

Was never happy either day or night  
 Without the fair Gulnár and would not quit  
 His couch unless in her auspicious presence.  
 When it was time to rise and have the throne  
 Draped with brocade, and still the damsel came not,  
 He was both angry and aggrieved at her.

The guards were posted at the gate without,  
 Throne, crown, and palace were in readiness  
 While from the court-gate rose the chamberlain,  
 Approached the famous king, and said: "There wait  
 The chief men of the kingdom at the gate."

• § 6

*How Ardawán heard of the Flight of Ardshír with the Damsel  
 and pursued them*

The monarch asked the slaves: "Why doth Gulnár  
 Neglect the rule and come not to my pillow?  
 Is she offended with me?"

Thereupon

The chief scribe entered, saying : " Yesternight  
Ardshír went off incontinent and took  
A grey steed and a black steed from the stables—  
The riding horses of the illustrious king—  
Companioned by thy well-loved treasures."

The warrior-king much moved bestrode his bay,  
Escorted by a host of gallant horsemen :  
Thou wouldst have said : " He goeth over fire."

Upon the road he saw a place of note  
With many men and cattle, and inquired :—  
" Did any hear the sound of hoofs ere day '  
Did two pass on a grey steed and a black ' "

C. 1373

One said : " Two passed on two steeds desertward,  
And at their heels a goodly mountain-sheep,  
Which kicked the dust up horse-like."

Ardawán

Said to his minister : " Why ever went  
The mountain-sheep with them ? "

He made reply :—

" It is his Grace—the wings that will exalt him  
To kingship through the favour of the stars.  
If this sheep followeth him our task is lengthened."

There Ardawán dismounted, ate, and rested,  
Then hurried on. They followed up Ardshír,  
And Ardawán in person led the way  
With his wazír. Swift as a blast the youth  
Rode with the damsel with no moment's pause,  
But he who hath high heaven for his ally  
Will take no harm from any enemy.  
Ardshír at length, exhausted by the ride,  
Beheld a pool of water from the height,  
And as he rode said to Gulnár : " Since we  
Have wedded toil, dismount we by this pool,  
For steed and rider are alike fordome.  
Repose we here and drink and start refreshed."

Now when the twain had drawn anigh the water

Their visages as yellow as the sun,  
 And when Ardshír was fain to light him down,  
 He saw beside the watering-place two youths,  
 Who called out quickly: "There is need to ply  
 The reins and stirrup still for thou hast 'scaped  
 Thus far the breath and gullet of the Dragon,  
 And to drink water now will cost thee dear,  
 Yea even thy life."

Ardshír, on hearing this,  
 Said to Gulnár: "Attend to what they say."

He pressed his stirrups, gave his steed the reins,  
 And laid his glittering spear upon his shoulder.  
 Behind them Ardawán like rushing wind  
 Continued the pursuit with soul all gloom.  
 When half the day had passed, and while the  
 orb—

The lustre of the world—still paced the sky,  
 He saw a city—one in goodly case—  
 Whence many flocked to meet him, and he asked  
 The archimages: "When passed two on horse-  
 back?"

Their leader said: "O prosperous, prudent king!  
 Just as the sun was growing pale, and night  
 Spread out the cloak of lapis-lazuli,  
 C. 1374 Two hurried through the city, soiled with dust  
 And parched with thirst, while after one of them  
 There came a mountain-sheep, and I have seen  
 None like it pictured in the palaces!"

Said the wazír to Ardawán; "Stop here,  
 Unless thou wilt return and get thee ready  
 Both soldiers and the implements of war,  
 Because the fashion of this strife hath changed  
 In that his fortune backeth him; to follow  
 Is but to grasp the wind. Write to thy son,  
 And tell him all. Perchance he may discover  
 Trace of Ardshír whom we must suffer not

To milk this mountain-sheep.”<sup>1</sup>

Now Ardawán,

On hearing this. knew that it was too late,  
And so alighting at that city prayed  
To God—the Giver of all good—for aid.

## § 7

*How Ardawán wrote to Bahman, his Son, to take Ardshír*

At dawn the monarch bade the host return,  
And pale as reeds re-entered Rai by night.  
He wrote a letter to his son and said :—  
Deceit hath taken action, and Ardshír  
Hath left me quicker than the shaft the bow,  
And gone to Párs. Seek for him privily,  
But say no word to any.”

For his part

Ardshír approached the water and thus prayed :—  
‘O Thou who art our Helper! Thou hast saved  
Me from my foeman : never may he prosper.”

Now when he had reposed he called a boatman,  
And spake much of the past. The shrewd, old sailor  
Observed Ardshír’s high stature, mien, and breast,  
Knew : “He can be but of the Kaian stock,”  
Rejoicing in his Grace and Majesty,  
Then hasting to the water sent his boats  
To every part. At news of famed Ardshír  
A host assembled by the water-side.  
While in Istakhr the kindred of Pápak  
All gloried at those tidings of the Sháh,  
While those too of Dára, who dwelt resigned  
About the realm, exulted and grew young  
Of heart though old. while troop on troop the folk

<sup>1</sup> Or, reading with P, “We must not let this mountain-sheep turn lion.”

C. 1375

Flocked to the youth from mountain and from sea,  
 And from each city counsellors and sages  
 Assembled round that claimant of the world.  
 The young Ardshír loosed tongue and said : “ Ye chiefs  
 Of ardent soul ! of all this noble throng  
 There is no sage or counsellor but knoweth  
 What shame the infamous Sikandar <sup>1</sup> wrought  
 Upon the world, slew all mine ancestors,  
 And laid his hand on it unrighteously.  
 Now I am one sprung from Asfandiyár,  
 Yet Ardawán is king ! We may not speak  
 Or think of this as just. If ye will help me  
 I will not yield the crown and lofty throne  
 To any. What have ye to say hereto ?  
 Give me a fair reply.”

Then all the assembly,  
 Both warriors and counsellors, stood up,  
 And, speaking from their hearts, made answer thus :—  
 “ All we that are the kindred of Pápak  
 Rejoice to see thy face, and we that are  
 Dependents of Sáwán will vindicate ourselves

---



But must clear Párs of Weeds and afterward  
 Make war on Ardawán, whilst thou and fortune  
 Are young, because in treasure he surpasseth  
 The other Tribal Kings; 'twill tax thy strength  
 To fight with him, but when thou hast cast down  
 His throne none else will hold his own with thee."

Whenas the illustrious Ardshír heard this  
 The words approved themselves and pleased his heart,  
 And when the sun rose from the mountain-tops  
 He set forth from the water toward Istakhr.  
 News reached Bahman, the son of Ardawán,  
 And filled him, heart and soul, with grief and gloom.  
 He tarried not upon the throne of night,  
 But gathered troops and weapons for the fight.

## § 8

*How Tabák helped Ardshír, fought with Bahman, and  
 conquered him*

There was a noble hight Tabák, possessed  
 Of arms, of soldiery, and prudent counsels.  
 The ruler of the city of Jahram,  
 A veteran sage and one whose word was law.  
 He had seven noble sons, and at the news  
 About Ardshír went from Jahram to him.  
 With tymbals and a host, prepared for battle  
 Abandoning Bahman. When he beheld  
 Ardshír he lighted as the custom was,  
 Ran to him, kissed his feet, and spake at large  
 Of the Sásánians. The atheling  
 Showed him much favour, setting store upon  
 That speedy coming, yet suspected somewhat,  
 And dreaded that old man and watched him well  
 Upon the march because his force was great.  
 The veteran was shrewd, knew what Ardshír

C. 1376

Thought, and came with the Zandavasta, saying :—  
 “May God cut off Tabák’s all worthless life  
 If in my heart be aught but honesty.  
 As soon as I heard news of Sháh Ardshír,  
 How he had reached the water with his host,  
 I loathed king Ardawán as young men loathe  
 An agéd spouse. Know that I am thy slave  
 To love and prosper thee, to serve thee well,  
 And keep thy secrets.”

Thereupon Ardshír  
 Began to estimate him differently,  
 And treat him like a sire, appointing him  
 Chief of the men of name, ceased to suspect,  
 Went to the temples of Kharrád and Rám,  
 And prayed to God to guide him to all good,  
 To give him all success and make his tree  
 Of majesty bear fruit, then sought his tent  
 Where both the counsellors and muster-master  
 Appeared before him, and he numbered all  
 The host, both horse and foot, and ascertained  
 Who were the leaders and the warriors,  
 Became acquaint with each, inquired his name,  
 And was rejoiced at such a mighty host.  
 C. 1377 He gave his soldiers pay, accoutred them,  
 Called on the just Bestower of all good  
 And, when the host was like a fierce pard, went  
 To fight Bahman, the son of Ardawán.  
 The armies met, the heroes sought the fray,  
 The troops drew up, lance, sword, and dart in hand.

Whenas the Azure was unveiled the host  
 Led by Tabák advanced, like warrior-lions  
 Closed with the foe, and poured blood streamlike. Thus  
 Dust filled the air, and men the earth, till sunset.  
 Arose a blast with pitchy clouds of dust,  
 And from the army’s centre came Ardshír.  
 Whereat Bahman, the son of Ardawán,

Fled pierced with arrows and his soul all gloom,  
 While Sháh Ardshír was instant in pursuit,  
 With blaring trumpets and with arrow-rain,  
 Until they reached the city of Istakhr,  
 Seat of the fame and glory of Bahman.

The Sháh's fame filled the world, and countless troops  
 Flocked to him. He was shown the many hoards  
 Of treasure that Pápak had toiled to gather.  
 Ardshír gave them in largess. When at length  
 He marched from Párs it was with growing strength.

## § 9

*How Arlawán led forth his Host for Battle with Ardshír  
 and was slain.*

When news reached Ardawán fear filled his heart,  
 And gloom his mind. He said : " A lord of counsel  
 Told me this secret of the lofty sky,<sup>1</sup>  
 But can one 'scape by pains unthought of ills ?  
 I did not fancy that Ardshír would prove  
 To be ambitious and a lion-taker."

He oped his treasury, gave rations out,  
 Bound on the baggage, and led forth the host ;  
 Contingents came from Gil and from Dílám :  
 The army's dust rose moon-ward while the Sháh<sup>2</sup>  
 Led forth a host that barred the wind. Two bow-shots  
 Divided power from power ; snakes found no rest,  
 Such was the din of drum and clarion,  
 The clangour of the gongs and Indian bells.  
 The armies shouted and the banners waved,  
 While blue steel falchions scattered heads around.

The battle lasted thus for forty days,  
 The world was straitened to the common folk,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.* Ardshír.

C. 1378

The plain grew mountain-like with all the slain,  
 The wounded were aweary of their life.  
 At last there rose a mighty, sable cloud,  
 And men could strive no more. A frightful storm  
 Succeeded, and the warriors lost all heart.  
 The mountains echoed and the plain was rent  
 While air reverberated. Then the troops  
 Of Ardawán were frayed and all exclaimed  
 With one consent : " This storm hath come from God  
 On Ardawán ; this host will need our tears."

So all the wise one day, when fight was fiercest,  
 Asked quarter, and Ardshír charged from the centre ;  
 Arose a clashing while the arrows showered.  
 Amidmost of the mellay Ardawán  
 Was ta'en, and for his crown gave up sweet life.  
 The hand of one Kharrád seized on his bridle,  
 And bare him captive to the atheling.  
 Ardshír saw him from far. King Ardawán  
 Lit from his steed, his body arrow-pierced,  
 His soul all gloom, and Sháh Ardshír commanded  
 The deathsman : " Go, seize on the great king's foe,  
 Cleave him asunder with thy sword, and make  
 Our evil-wishers quail."

So did the deathsman :  
 That famous monarch vanished from the world.

Such is the usage of the ancient sky :  
 The lot of Ardawán Ardshír too found ;  
 Him whom it raiseth to the stars on high  
 It giveth likewise to the sorry ground !

Two sons of him by whom Árash's seed  
 Thus had been brought to shame were taken too.  
 The noble Sháh Ardshír imprisoned them  
 With fetters on their feet. Two elder sons  
 Succeeded in escaping from the fight,  
 And were not taken in the net of bale.  
 They went in tears to Hindústán, and thou

Mayst well narrate a tale concerning them.<sup>1</sup>

The battle-field was full of reins and girdles.  
The weapons of the host, and gold and silver,  
Which were collected by the Shah's command,  
And given to the troops. Among the chiefs  
Tabāk was most concerned to cleanse the corpse  
Of Ardawán from blood. lamenting while  
He washed away the dust of fight, and built  
A charnel as the royal custom was.  
He robed the wounded bosom in brocade,  
He placed a crown of camphor on the head,  
And none of all the troops that went to Rai  
Might tread the palace-dust of Ardawán.<sup>2</sup>

Tabāk thereafter came before Ardshír,  
And said: "O Shah who seekest after wisdom!  
Demand the child of Ardawán to wife,  
For she hath Grace and beauty, crown and throne.  
Then will this diadem and all the treasures  
That he collected with such toil be thine."

C. 1379

He listened to the words of wise advice,  
And asked the daughter for his spouse forthwith,  
Then stayed a month or twain within the palace.  
A mighty leader with a mighty host.

From Rai the aspirant went toward Párs and rested  
From travail and dispute. He built a city,  
All palaces and gardens, and therein  
Were fountain, plain, and dale. and to this day  
The noble, ancientthane<sup>3</sup> doth speak thereof  
As Khurra-i-Ardshír.<sup>4</sup> Within a spring

<sup>1</sup> Firdausí does so later on. See p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> As a rule the belongings of a fallen king or minister were given up to spoil, and this is implied in C, but the context seems to show that the reading of P, followed in the translation, is correct. Cf. Vol. iv. p. 212 *seq.* Tabarí's account, however, favours C. See p. 255.

<sup>3</sup> Thethane of Chách mentioned above, p. 210.

<sup>4</sup> Khurra-i-Ardshír, "The Grace of Ardshír," was the name given by him to the district and city of Gūr, not Zūr as in the text, now Firúzábád. See NT, p. 11 and *note*.

That never failed gave water for canals.  
 Beside it he set up a Fane of Fire,  
 Revived the feasts of Sada<sup>1</sup> and Mihrgán,<sup>2</sup>  
 And round it splendid edifices raised,  
 With pleasancess and parks and palaces.  
 (When that wise Sháh of Grace and might was dead  
 The border-chieftain named the city Zúr).  
 He founded villages all round about,  
 And there he settled folk when all was ready.  
 He saw within one quarter a deep lake,  
 But needs must pierce a height that intervened.  
 They brought picks and artificers, and clove  
 The mountain with a hundred water-ways.  
 He led them thence to Zúr. It was a seat  
 Abounding both in dwellings and in neat.

## § 10

*How Ardshír fought with the Kurds and was defeated*

Then Sháh Ardshír led from Istakhr a host  
 Innumerable to war against the Kurds,  
 Who, when he came anear, encountered him  
 In numbers numberless. What seemed a trifle  
 Became of moment, for the country round  
 All sided with the Kurds who both outnumbered  
 And hemmed the Sháh's host in. All day till night  
 The fight raged, then the world-lord's forces fled,  
 The field was straitened by the killed and wounded.  
 No man of name survived except the Sháh,  
 And some few troops whose tongues were cracked with  
     thirst  
 Through blazing sunshine and the clouds of dust.  
 When night had reared its flag, and ended strife  
 And stir, the Sháh marked on a mountain-side

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* 175 and note.

A fire, and went toward it with his men.  
 He found there hinds in charge of sheep and goats. C. 1380  
 He and his men alighted with their mouths  
 Filled with the dust of fight. He asked in haste  
 For water which they brought and curdled milk.  
 He rested, ate of what he found, took off  
 His breastplate, used it as his fittest couch,  
 And made his royal helmet serve as pillow.

When dawn rose from the deep, and he awoke,  
 The chief hind visited his couch and said :—  
 “Be evil far from thee both day and night.  
 What ill hath caused thy journey hitherward.  
 And made thee make a couch of thy cuirass?”

The Sháh then questioned him about the way :—  
 “Where can I shelter next?”

The chief herd said :—  
 “Thou wilt not find a habitable place,  
 Without a guide, but wilt, with one to lead thee,  
 Discover such, four leagues away, and thence  
 The villages, each with a well-known chief.  
 Are frequent.”

So he took old herds as guides.  
 When he arrived the head man of the village  
 Came out at once to meet him. He sent horsemen,  
 Both young and old, to Khurra-i-Ardshír :  
 The host at news of him set forth rejoicing.  
 He sent men also to spy out the Kurds.  
 These men went forth, returned, and said : “They all  
 Are boasting of their deeds and making merry :  
 None recketh of the Sháh, regarding him  
 As out-worn in Istakhr with ageing fortune.”

The Sháh rejoiced and deemed the past mere wind  
 Chose from his famous host three thousand horsemen  
 With scimitars, and took in company  
 A thousand archers with artillery.

## § 11

*How Ardshír attacked the Kurds by Night and  
overthrew them*

- C. 1381 He led the host forth as the sun grew pale,  
Left all the unfit behind, and in the dark  
And dead of night came on the Kurds, and saw  
Earth strewn with sleepers while his own troops raged.  
The chieftain reached the pillow of the Kurds,  
He gave his fleet steed rein, unsheathed, and charged.  
He crowned the grass with blood. The plain was all  
The heads and hands of Kurds who strewed earth's face  
By scores, and countless of them were made captive:  
Their truculence and folly were brought low.  
He gave their lands to spoil, to all his troops  
Both crowns and purses, and from that time forth  
If some old man had borne upon his head  
A tray of gold across those deserts, none  
Would e'en have glanced thereon, such was the fortune  
And justice of the Sháh! He tarried not  
To celebrate his victory but marched  
Back to Istakhr and issued these commands:—  
“Repose your steeds, repair your arms, and cheer  
Yourselves with feasts. for ye may have to think  
Of war ere long.”

The warriors fell to eating,  
But when their waists had rested from their girdles  
Ardshír devised new warfare. Mind it well,  
This tale, when thou shalt hear, of what befell.

## § 12

*The Story of Hajtúád and the Case of the Worm*

Now mark this strange, eventful history  
Of Kujárán, a city on the sea



Of Párs, told by a rustic bard for he  
Hath dealt at large with Persian legendry.

There was a city strait but full of men,  
Who all must work to eat, and many girls  
Therein were poor and earned their bread withal.  
On one side was a mountain near at hand  
Whereto the damsels all were wont to fare.  
Each with her distaff-case of poplar-wood,  
And with her weighed-out stint of unspun cotton.  
They used to gather at the city-gate  
Before they started and to club whatever  
They brought of provand, but their talk ne'er ran  
On resting or on eating: their concern  
Was cotton which at night they brought back spun.

C. 1382

There dwelt within that city, one Haftwád,  
Who was so named because he had seven sons,<sup>1</sup>  
A man of cheerful turn but indigent.  
He had too one dear daughter and no more,  
But daughters he esteemed of no account.

One day it happened that the troop of girls  
Sat at their spinning on the mountain-side.  
They clubbed together all the food they had,  
And during meal-time laid their distaffs by.  
'Twas then it happened that this lucky girl  
Beheld a windfall lying on the path,  
An apple which she picked up hastily.  
Now list to this strange tale. When that fair maid  
Had bitten the fruit she saw a worm inside.  
She picked it from the apple and then gently  
Transferred it to her distaff-case, and said,  
As she resumed her spinning: "In the name  
Of God who hath no partner and no peer,  
I'll show you wondrous spinning done to-day  
All through the good luck of an apple-worm!"

The girls grew merry and began to laugh,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 206.

Grew blithe of blee and showed their silver teeth.  
 That day she spun a double quantity,  
 And marked the sum thereof upon the ground,  
 Then hurried home like smoke and showed her mother  
 The yarn. Her mother praised her fondly, saying:—  
 “Thou hast done well, thou Moon with sunlike face!”

Next morning, having measured off the twist,  
 She took a double stint, and all agog,  
 Heart, soul, and body, on her spinning, joined  
 That busy band and told those fair-famed girls:—  
 “Ye moon-faced and well favoured by the stars!  
 By this worm’s fortune I have spun so much  
 That never I shall want’.”

She spun that stint,  
 And might have dealt with more. She carried home  
 What she had spun, whereat her mother’s heart  
 Became like jocund Paradise. Each morning  
 The pretty damsel gave the worm some apple,  
 And spun off all the cotton howsoever  
 The tale might be increased, the little witch!

One day the parents asked their worthy daughter:—  
 “Hast thou obtained a fairy for thy sister  
 That thou dost spin so much, thou goodly one?”

C. 1383      Forthwith the fair maid told her mother all  
 About the apple with the little worm  
 Concealed therein, and showed the glorious creature  
 To both her parents who rejoiced the more.  
 Haftwád, who took it for an augury,  
 Gave up his work; he talked of nothing save  
 The luck of the Worm. His fortune which had aged  
 Grew young. Thus time passed and his prospects  
 brightened.  
 They did not slight the Worm but fed it well.  
 It grew in size and strength, its head and back  
 Were beautifully hued, and it outgrew  
 The distaff-case. Its coat, which turned as dark

As musk, had saffron spots throughout. Haftwád  
Prepared a goodly, sable cabinet,  
And lodged the creature there. It came to pass  
That in that city everybody looked  
For counsel and for justice to Haftwád,  
Who grew in honour, consequence, and wealth,  
And all his seven sons were rich as well.  
The city had a governor—a man  
With rank, renown, and soldiery—who sought  
Occasion to deprive Haftwád, the base-born,  
Of his *dínárs*, but many of the nobles  
Took sides with him and his seven warlike sons.  
The trumpet-call was heard in Kujárán:  
They marched out with their spears, and swords, and  
arrows,

Led by Haftwád who played the man in fight,  
Seized on the city, slew the governor,  
And captured all his jewels and his treasures.

A crowd of folk assembled round Haftwád.  
He went from Kujárán toward the mountain,  
Upon whose top he built a hold whereto  
The citizens migrated in a mass.  
He fitted up the hold with iron gates;  
’Twas serviceable both in peace and war.  
Upon the mountain-top there was a spring,  
Which by good fortune rose amidst the hold:  
Around he built a wall of viewless height.

Now when the Worm outgrew its cabinet  
They made a tank of masonry<sup>1</sup> and, when  
The air had dried it, tenderly disposed  
The Worm within. Each day at dawn its keeper  
Would hurry from Haftwád to dress its food—  
A cauldronful of rice. The growing Worm  
Consumed it all. Years passed; its neck and limbs  
Grew large as elephant’s, and then Haftwád

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Surnamed the hold Kirmán,<sup>1</sup> his own bright daughter  
 Became the guardian of the Worm, and he  
 The leader of its troops. Wazír and scribe  
 Attended it; it fed on rice, milk, honey,  
 While at its door Haftwád, the chieftain, stood  
 To answer for it both in bad and good.<sup>2</sup>

## § 13

*How Ardshír fought with Haftwád and was worsted*

Now when Ardshír heard of Haftwád the news  
 Displeased him, and he sent against that chief  
 A host of valiant, high-starred warriors.  
 Haftwád, on hearing of them, took it lightly.  
 He set an ambush in a mountain-coign,  
 And went himself to combat with his troops.  
 Now when the battle raged, and while the soldiers  
 Plied mace and battle-ax, the force in ambush  
 Advanced, earth gloomed to those Íránians,  
 For none knew head from foot, and thou hadst said:—  
 “Earth manacled their hands.” Such were the slain  
 On desert, dale, and mountain that the victors  
 Tired of the slaughter. The survivors sped  
 Back to the Sháh. Now when renowned Ardshír  
 Heard of the fight, the slaughter, and the plunder,  
 He sorrowed, summoned to him all his host,  
 And hasted to distribute arms and pay.  
 He set forth wrathfully against Haftwád;  
 The head of that base-born one rose to heaven;  
 He brought forth arms and treasure from the hold,  
 Misprizing both that army and the war.  
 Now when his eldest son, then far away,  
 Heard that his father was engaged in strife  
 He left ease, feasting, and repose, and crossed

<sup>1</sup> See p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> Six couplets omitted.

The water in a boat. That atheling,  
 An ill-conditioned youth, was named Sháh-wí. C. 1385  
 He thus rejoined Haftwád who joyed but kept  
 The right wing and the chief command himself.  
 Both hosts were goodly, furnished, well equipped,  
 And combative. The young Sháh's heart grew old  
 With trouble at the sight. They ranged their ranks.  
 The scimitars flashed out, the reek went up,  
 And when the drums beat on the elephants  
 Folk deafened two miles off. The trumpets blared,  
 The world re-echoed with the brazen cymbals,  
 While earth reeled 'neath the horse-shoes and the  
     nails;  
 The air was tulip-hued with flags of chiefs.  
 The crash of axes on the crests of helms.  
 Reverberated from heaven while the rush  
 Of wind-foot chargers rent the ground asunder,  
 And pass and plain were full of headless corpses.  
 Such was Haftwád's host that thou wouldst have said :—  
 "The sea is wind-tossed." Ant and fly were cramped  
 For room, those armies so fulfilled the plain.  
 Thus was it till day waned and night outspread  
 Its cloak of lapis-lazuli. Ardshír  
 Drew in his troops. Behind him was the sea.  
 Now when eve's rusty livery grew dark,  
 And when the scouts went out from both the hosts,  
 The soldiers of the Sháh became the prey  
 Of hunger for his foeman barred the way.

## § 14

*How Mihrak of Jahram sacked the Palace of Ardshír*

Lived at Jahram a man of low degree<sup>1</sup>—  
 Mihrak son of Núshzád—who, when he heard

<sup>1</sup> Of Kaian race, according to P.

C. 1386

About the expedition of Ardshír,  
 His tarrying by the sea, and how his host  
 Was starving, with communications barred.  
 Marched on the palace of the Sháh, assembled  
 Troops past all count, and sacked it, lavishing  
 No stint of crowns and purses on his soldiers.  
 The Sháh received the tidings by the sea,  
 And said in grief: "Why did I leave my home  
 Defenceless and attack an alien foe?"  
 Called all the chiefs, spake of Mihrak at large,  
 And said: "What think ye, leaders of the host!  
 Of such an impasse? I have tasted much  
 Of fortune's bitterness, but reckoned not  
 On trouble from Mihrak!"

They cried: "O Sháh:  
 Ne'er may thine eyes behold ill-luck. Why take  
 Things ill because Mihrak hath proved thy foe  
 In secret? Thou hast greatness, and the world  
 Is thine. Thy slaves are we; 'tis thine to bid."

He gave command to have the tables set;  
 They called for wine and cups and minstrelsy.  
 They served up divers lambs<sup>1</sup> upon the board,  
 And all the guests disposed themselves to eat,  
 But when Ardshír himself took bread there came  
 A pointed shaft and deeply lodged itself  
 Within the dainty plumpness of a lamb,  
 Whereat those brave, wise chiefs forbore to eat.  
 All sorely grieved. One drew the arrow forth.  
 They saw that there was writing on the shaft;  
 Those that were clerkly of the magnates read it;  
 The writing on the arrow was old Persian,  
 And thus it ran: "If thou wilt hear, wise Sháh!  
 This issued from the hold's top which is safe  
 Through the luck of the Worm. Had I directed it

<sup>1</sup> Lambs are still served up whole at feasts in Persia. C. J. Wills, *Land of the Lion and the Sun*, p. 91.

Against Ardshír the feathers would have pierced him.  
No monarch, such as he is, in our days  
Can overthrow the Worm."

Then to the archmages  
The Sháh read out the script on that sharp arrow.  
The hold was two leagues off! The nobles' hearts  
Were straitened, but they all evoked upon  
The Glory of earth's king God's benison.

## § 15

*How Ardshír heard about the Worm and made  
Shift to slay it*

The Sháh mused much that night about the Worm  
And, when the sun displaced the moon set forth  
With all his army from the sea and hurried  
Toward Párs. The foe pursued him, seized the roads.  
And slaughtered all the chieftains, but the Sháh  
Escaped with his own meiny while behind him  
The foe cried: "May the Worm's luck light its throne."

All said: "A marvel—one for all to ponder!" C. 1387  
Now as he fled in fear o'er hill and plain  
He saw a spacious city, and they urged  
Like wolves their steeds. As he approached he saw  
A house and at the door two stranger youths.  
There halted he and his. The honest pair  
Asked him: "Whence come ye so unseasonably,  
So dusty from the road, and travel-worn?"

He said: "Ardshír hath come this way, and we  
Lagged on the route. He fleeth from the Worm.  
Haftwád, and that base man's ignoble crew."

The youths had ruth upon him; they grew sad  
And dark of soul, made him dismount and greeted  
His nobles well, prepared him pleasant quarters  
And furnished food that was acceptable.

The mighty men sat with the Sháh at meat  
 While those two youths began to entertain him,  
 And said aloud : " Exalted one ! no grief  
 Or joy will last. Mark what Zahhák, the tyrant,  
 Brought on the throne of kingship, how kings' hearts  
 Ached through malevolent Afrásiyáb,  
 And how Sikandar, in these latter days,  
 Slew all the monarchs of the world ; all these <sup>1</sup>  
 Have passed away, have left an evil name,  
 And not attained to jocund Paradise.  
 'Twill be thus with Haftwád ; that miscreant  
 Will writhe at last."

The Sháh's heart at their words  
 Became as fresh as roses in the spring.  
 The speech of those two gracious ones consoled him,  
 He told his secret, and, declared himself.  
 " I am," he said, " Ardshír, son of Sásán.  
 And am in need of comforting advice.  
 How deal we with this Worm and with Haftwád ?  
 May both his name and lineage cease on earth."

Thereat the two young men did homage, saying :—  
 " All hail ! Be ill's hand ever far from thee.  
 Be we thy bond-slaves both in soul and body,  
 And thou confirmed in spirit evermore.  
 As for the matter that thou askest us  
 We will advise thee well that thou mayst use  
 Craft from the first. In battle with the Worm,  
 And with Haftwád, thou wilt not be approved  
 Unless thou shalt adopt the proper course.  
 They have their seat upon the mountain-peak ;  
 Within it are the Worm, the troops, and treasure ;  
 Before it is the city and behind  
 The sea, the hold is on the mountain-top,  
 And access difficult. The Worm withal  
 Deriveth from the brain of Áhriman—

c. 1388

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* Zahhák, Afrásiyáb, and Sikandar. *Cf.* pp. 15, 224 and *note*, and Vol. i. p. 59.



The foeman of the Maker of the world.  
 Thou callest it a Worm, but in its skin  
 There is a combative, blood-thirsty dív !”

Ardshír, on hearing this, which won his love  
 And pleased his heart, replied : “ So be it then,  
 And ye shall have the credit or the blame.”

The young men’s answer pleased his prudent heart :—  
 “ We stand before thee ever as thy slaves.  
 And guides to good.”

Made happy by their words  
 He fared triumphant and with heart all justice,  
 And, when he left, the youths companioned him.  
 He went with ardent heart and full of heed,  
 With head held high to Khurra-i-Ardshír.  
 Troops, magnates, men of lore and counsellors  
 Flocked to the Sháh, who rested for a while,  
 Gave out supplies, then marched against Mihrak.  
 Son of Núshzád, to whom the world grew dark  
 And strait because he dared not fight; that traitor  
 Hid when the great king drew anear Jahram.  
 The great king’s heart was wrathful. He abode  
 Until Mihrak was taken, then smote through  
 His neck with Indian scimitar, consigned  
 The headless body to the flames, and put  
 All captives of his kindred to the sword.  
 Howbeit one daughter was concealed despite  
 The hue and cry for her throughout the city.

Thence he departed to attack the Worm,  
 As all his host desired, and took with him  
 Twelve thousand horsemen proved and veteran.  
 When he had concentrated all his troops  
 He led them to a spot between two mountains.  
 A prudent man, Shahrgír by name, commanded  
 The host of Sháh Ardshír, who said to him :—  
 “ Remain here on the watch with outposts, set  
 Both day and night, shrewd cavaliers and guides,

And furthermore both day and night employ  
 Patrols and sentries to safe-guard the host.  
 For my part I shall use a stratagem,  
 As did mine ancestor Asfandiyár,<sup>1</sup>  
 And if the watch should see a smoke by day,  
 Or in the night a blazing like the sun,  
 Know ye that all is over with the Worm,  
 Its luck and traffic gone."

C. 1389

He chose seven men,  
 All brave and Lions on the day of battle,  
 Among his chiefs. Those in his confidence  
 Ne'er breathed a word. He chose too many a gem  
 Out of his hoards, brocade, dínárs, and goods  
 Of every kind, and wisely spared not wealth.  
 He packed two boxes full of lead and solder,  
 And added to the load a brazen pot,  
 Because he was a master of his craft.  
 When all the baggage was in readiness  
 He ordered his chief equerry to bring  
 Ten asses, put a driver's blanket on,  
 And chose the gold and silver as his load.  
 When anxiously they started for the hold  
 He took with him the two young country-folk,  
 Who had received him on a former day,  
 As friends and counsellors. When near at hand  
 They rested on the mountain and drew breath.

The servants of the Worm were sixty men,  
 And every one was busy at his work.  
 One saw the company and called to them :—  
 "What is there in these packs?"

The Sháh replied :—  
 "All sorts of goods—clothes, gold and silver, trinkets,  
 Brocade, dínárs, silk stuffs, and jewelry.  
 I am a merchantman of Khurásán,  
 And have no rest from toil, am well to do

<sup>1</sup> When taking the Brazen Hold. See Vol. v. p. 143.

By favour of the Worm and now have come  
Rejoicing to its seat. It blesseth me,  
And, if I may but serve it, all is well."

Thereat the servants of the Worm flung back  
The castle-gate. When they had brought the loads  
Inside, the noble Sháh took charge, undid  
A pack forthwith, and made the needful gifts.  
He spread before the attendants of the Worm  
The leathern table of the traveller,  
And stood as slaves are wont, unlocked the chests,  
Brought and filled cups with wine, but those whose  
turn

It was to feed the Worm with milk and rice  
Refused to drink; their duty kept them sober.  
Now as they sat Ardshír sprang up and said :—  
"Abundance both of rice and milk have I  
And, if the Worm's chief servitor permitteth,  
Will gladly feed it for three days myself;  
Fame may ensue, and I shall share its luck.  
For three days then be merry and drink wine.  
At sun-rise on the fourth I will erect  
A spacious warehouse higher than the walls,  
For as a chapman seeking purchasers  
I fain would curry favour with the Worm."

C. 1390

This gained his end. They said: "Do thou provide."  
So that ass-driver undertook the toil,  
While sat the servitors with wine in hand,  
And feasted and grew drunk, and came to be  
The servitors of wine, not of the Worm.  
Now when the wine-cup had bemused their minds  
The master of the world came with his hosts,<sup>1</sup>  
Brought forth the metal and the brazen pot,  
And lit a fire by daylight. When 'twas time  
To feed the Worm its food was of boiling lead.  
He bore the molten metal to the tank.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* his former entertainers—the two youths. See p. 239.

Whence that tame creature raised its head. They saw  
 Its tongue thrust out, just like an Arab cymbal,  
 As when it used to eat the rice. The youths  
 Poured down the molten stuff and quelled the Worm.  
 There came a rumble from its maw and shook  
 The tank and ground. Came like the wind Ardshír  
 With those two youths; they plied sword, mace, and  
 shaft,

And none among those drunken servitors  
 Escaped their hands with life. Ardshír sent up  
 A black smoke from the castle-roof to tell  
 The exploit to the captain of the host,  
 To whom the look-out hurried to announce:—  
 “Ardshír hath won!”

Shahrgír made no delay.  
 But marched to meet the Sháh with his array.

## § 16

### *How Ardshír slew Haftwád*

Now when Haftwád was ware thereof his heart  
 Grèw full of anguish and his head of sighs.  
 He came to repossess the hold. The king  
 Ascended to the walls in haste. Haftwád  
 Strove but to small result. for on the ramparts  
 There was a Lion's foot.<sup>1</sup> The Íránian host  
 Came mountain-like, but halted seared and sore.<sup>2</sup>  
 Then Sháh Ardshír cried from the battlements:—  
 “O valiant lion-catcher!<sup>3</sup> fall upon them,  
 For if Haftwád escapeth from our midst

<sup>1</sup> Persian etymology derives Ardshír from “ard,” anger, and “shír,” a lion. The true is “arta,” great, and “khshathra,” king.

<sup>2</sup> Their previous experiences with Haftwád had been unfortunate. Cf. p. 236 *seq.*

<sup>3</sup> The name of Ardshír's general was Shahrgír—i.e. City-taker. Ardshír addresses him as Shírgír, i.e. Lion-taker.

Thou wilt have naught in hand but toil and wind.  
 I have given the molten metal to the Worm ;  
 Gone is its luck, its fierce career abated."

The troops all heard the Sháh's words, donned their  
 helms

C. 1391

And, grieved at past discomfiture, took heart,  
 And girt their loins for vengeance. Then the wind  
 Turned on the Worm's troops. Soon Haftwád was taken,  
 As was that knave Sháhwi—his eldest son  
 And general. Ardshír descended quickly ;  
 Shahrgír met him afoot. They brought a steed  
 With golden trappings, and the famed king mounted ;  
 Then ordered to set up beside the sea  
 Two lofty gibbets and suspended thence  
 His two opponents living and woke up  
 The heart of all his foes. As for the twain,  
 He came forth from the centre of the host,  
 And put them both to death with showers of arrows.  
 He gave the wealth to spoil and thus enriched  
 His troops. The servants brought down from the hold  
 All that there was. Such of the wealth as pleased him  
 He hurried off to Khurra-i-Ardshír.

The Sháh set up a Fire-fane on the mountain,  
 Restored Mihrgán and Sada, and bestowed  
 Upon his lucky hosts<sup>1</sup> crown, throne, and province,  
 And thence departing, triumphing and glad,  
 Spread justice over Párs. When man and beast  
 Had rested he led on his host to Zúr,  
 Sent to Kirmán an army, and a man  
 Fit for the crown and throne, proceeded thence  
 To Taisafún and brought his foe's throne down.

Of this our whirling world it is the way  
 To keep concealed from thee its mystery.  
 Conform to it, 'twill not conform to thee,  
 Because its favour changeth every day.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 243, *note*.



• IV

THE SÁSÁNIAN DYNASTY





## IV

# THE SÁSÁNIAN DYNASTY

### ARGUMENT

The poet, in this the concluding dynasty of the *Shāhnāma*, tells of the rise, progress, and fall of the Sásanian empire from the days of its founder, Ardshir Pápakán, to those of Yazdagird, the last Sháh of the dynasty. He commemorates the reigns of its twenty-nine Sháhs, for the most part very briefly, but in some instances at great length, as in the cases of Bahrám Gúr, Núshirwán, and Khusrau Parwiz. He records, so far as Iránian tradition kept such things in memory, the foreign relations of the empire with other kings, races, and peoples, its internal administration and domestic concerns, the adventures that befell and the wisdom that was uttered, the invention of chess and the coming of the Gipsies. He then describes the conquest of Irán by the Arabs and ends with a short passage of personal reminiscence.

### NOTE

Having passed, as Firdausi says, "Sikandar's barrier"<sup>1</sup> and the great historic void of five centuries and more, peopled for us in the *Shāhnāma* by a few shades of names only, we alight at length on the authentic but unstable soil of the Sásanian dynasty; for even here the information presented to us is by no means consonant with modern Western canons of accuracy. The names are historic, and so are many of the events recorded, but there are no dates, and often what is historic is misplaced chronologically and attributed to the wrong actors and the wrong causes, sometimes very trivial ones—those, for instance, assigned by the street story-teller. Of many of the Sháhs only the facts of their accession, the length, often wrongly given, of their reigns, their inaugural speeches, and deaths are recorded. The occurrence, more than once, of a whole series of such reigns has a somewhat depressing effect on the reader and gives an appearance of truth

<sup>1</sup> p. 189.

to Atkinson's view that the interest of the *Sháhnáma* ends with the reign of Sikandar.<sup>1</sup> From this it might be thought that the poet, weary with his long labours and soured by hope deferred, had hurried over or scamped the concluding portion of his vast undertaking. It might be thought that even in the places where material is abundant his version of it had not the technique and attractiveness found in the earlier dynasties. In the opinion of the present writer such views are not justified by the facts of the case. It is true that here the visions of the childhood of the world fade into the light of common day, and the superhuman gives place to the human, but there is a measure of compensation in that very fact, and the study of the history of a whole epoch as it was conceived, interpreted, and handed down by popular tradition, cannot fail of interest and instruction. It must be remembered too that no other great poet ever imposed such strict limitations on himself, or so sternly adhered to them, as did Firdausí. He puts himself at the mercy of his authorities, and where they fail him, as they do sometimes in this portion of the *Sháhnáma*, he makes no attempt to invent incidents, but leaves a blank and passes on. This is a proceeding for which the poet should be praised rather than blamed. He was engaged in a high task, no doubt believed in the tales that he retold, just as his countrymen believe in them still, and he refused to add to the sacred story of his race as he found it in tradition. In cases, however, where his authorities offered him an opportunity he shows no falling off in vigour, as the reign of Bahráṁ Gúr, which will be found in the next volume, is in itself sufficient to prove. In it we seem to discern the soil and the seed whence sprang in after ages the well-beloved Nights called Arabian, but certainly of Persian origin, for we have the Sháh roaming disguised, or at least unrecognised, among his subjects of all classes, the freaks of despotic power, the humorous exaggerations, the Rabelaisian tale, and the clash of the cymbals of the Brides of the Treasure. Finally, in the story of Bahráṁ Chubína, which Macan admired so much,<sup>2</sup> the Sásánian dynasty possesses a historical romance both admirable in itself and admirably set forth by the poet. It remains to call attention to a few other points in connexion with this dynasty.

Ardshir Pápakán laid it down as a fundamental principle of government, if Iránian tradition may be credited, that the Throne and the Faith were interdependent. The Faith could not exist without the Throne, nor the Throne without the Faith. The two

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<sup>1</sup> AS. p. 510.

<sup>2</sup> C, Vol. i. p. xxxvii.

were brothers; they wore one cloak; they were two pieces of brocade interwoven; the slanderer of the Throne and the persecutor of the Faith were alike impious.<sup>1</sup> Whether Ardashir really spoke to this effect or not matters little. If he did not say so in word his deeds said it for him, and most of his successors followed his example. Later ages, noting this marked feature of the dynasty—the close union between the Throne and the Faith—naturally may have attributed corresponding sentiments to its founder. Accordingly the religion of Zoroaster, as represented by its official priesthood and supported by the throne, obtained during Sāsānian times a position of influence and dignity such as it never previously had enjoyed, at all events since the semi-mythical epoch of Gushtāsp and of Asfandiyār. Even with all its official advantages, however, the priesthood had much ado to maintain itself, amid the religious ferment of those centuries, alike against the antagonism of rival Faiths without and heresy within.<sup>2</sup> Orthodox Zoroastrianism was more than once almost in the position of an *Athanasius contra mundum*.<sup>3</sup> The Sāsānian Shāhs, for the most part, seem to have done their best to support the priesthood, and the latter showed its gratitude by a deep and loyal devotion to the House of Sāsān. This loyalty to the throne, coupled with aversion from all that was heterodox or unorthodox, was reflected in the national tradition as handed down by the chroniclers of the time, who for the most part were Zoroastrian priests themselves. Consequently in this part of the *Shāhnāma* the reader will find a strong legitimist feeling, expressed by occasional remarks or asides, running like a thread through the poem. This feeling takes the form of devotion to the House of Sāsān as a whole, with the exception of Yazdagird, son of Shāpūr, "The Wicked," and to the interests of the supposed rightful Shāh or heir for the time being as against usurpers or other claimants of the throne. These little outbursts certainly are not expressions of the poet's own personal views on such matters; he found them in his authorities and reproduced them. This remark also applies to passages of religious polemics. The poet's own views on such matters probably may be found in the parable of the kerchief.<sup>4</sup> These polemics represent the devotion of the Zoroastrian priesthood to orthodoxy, as they understood it, just as their legitimist outbursts expressed their loyalty to the throne, provided that it was occupied by rightful and orthodox Shāhs of the House of Sāsān.

A curious instance of this close union between Church and State

<sup>1</sup> See p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* Vol. v. p. 16, *note*.

<sup>3</sup> *Cf.* pp. 327, 358.

<sup>4</sup> See pp. 92, 95.

## THE SHAHNÁMÁ OF FIRDAUSÍ

in Sasanian times is given by Mas'ûdi in his "Book of Indication and Revision," but a few words may be said by way of preface. According to Zoroastrianism there are to be twelve millennia, at the expiration of the last of which—the present one—will come the Restoration of all things. Now the tenth millennium began on the day when the Revelation came to Zardusht,<sup>1</sup> and in the Dinkard we find a prophecy after the event, that the last two centuries of that particular millennium would be periods of great misery and wretchedness.<sup>2</sup> The Dinkard was compiled during the ninth century A.D., and Mas'ûdi lived during the first half of the tenth. This is what he tells us. There is a great difference between the opinion of the Persians and that of other people with reference to the epoch of Alexander, which most folk have not noticed. It is one of the secrets of the religion and royal policy of the Persians and is known only to the most erudite among the priests, as we have seen for ourselves in the province of Párs, Kirmán, and other countries where the Persians rule. It is not found in any of the books on Persian history or in any chronicle or annals. It is this. Zoroaster . . . in the Avasta—the book revealed to him—announces that in three centuries the empire of the Persians will experience a great revolution, without destruction to the religion, but that at the end of a thousand years, starting from the same epoch, that of Zoroaster, the empire and the religion will perish together. Now between Zoroaster and Alexander there is about three hundred years, for Zoroaster appeared in the time of Gushtásp . . . Ardshir, son of Pápak, possessed himself of the empire . . . about five hundred years after Alexander. We see then that there remained not more than two hundred years or thereabouts before the completion of the thousand years of the prophecy. Ardshir wished to augment by two hundred years this space of time . . . because he feared that when a hundred years should have elapsed after him men would refuse aid to the king, and to repulse his enemies, owing to their belief in the truth of the tradition relating to the future ruin of the empire. To obviate this he retrenched about half the time that had elapsed between Alexander and himself, and accordingly only made mention of a certain number of the Part Kings, who had occupied this period, and suppressed the remainder. Then he took pains to disseminate in his empire that he had made his appearance and possessed himself of the rule two hundred and sixty years after Alexander. Consequently this period was recognised and spread among men. For this reason there is a

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. v. p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> WPT, v. 94 *seq.*

difference between the Persians and other nations with respect to the era of Alexander, and this is why confusion has been imported into the annals of the Part Kings.<sup>1</sup> Whatever we may think with regard to the historical value of this explanation the fact remains that the duration of the epoch between Alexander the Great and Ardshir Papakān is reduced by Oriental historians generally. Its standard length may be put, as given by them, at 266 years. The above account makes Ardshir strike out 288 years of the actual historical number of 548 years.

In the notes to the various reigns of this dynasty no attempt will be made to present a complete historical sketch of the Persian history of the period by adding details and filling up the frequent *lacunæ* from other sources. Such history as the poem offers will be dealt with, but such as it ignores, *e.g.* many of the wars with the Eastern Roman empire, will be passed over in silence save where reference to some omitted historical event is needed for the better understanding of what has been included but misrepresented. Readers that desire to supplement the *Shāhnāma* will find ample material in the late Professor Rawlinson's "Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy," and in the Bibliography appended thereto, especially if they add Professor Noldeke's "Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit des Sasaniden," which was published three years later and is invaluable.

The form of the names of the various Shāhs, taken from Professor Rawlinson, and the duration of their respective reigns, as calculated by Professor Noldeke, are given between brackets.

A genealogical table of the Sāsānians, according to the *Shāhnāma*, will be found at the beginning of the volume.

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<sup>1</sup> MM, ix. 327.

## XXII

### ARDSHİR PÁPAKÁN

HE REIGNED FORTY YEARS AND TWO MONTHS

#### ARGUMENT

Ardshír, having become King of kings, marries the daughter of Ardawán, who attempts to poison him and is saved by Ardshír's minister. Shápúr is born and recognised by his father Ardshír. Ardshír consults Kaid about the future. Kaid's reply. The adventure of Shápúr with the daughter of Mihrak. The birth of Urmuzd, who is acknowledged by Ardshír as his grandson. Account of Ardshír's administration. He counsels Shápúr and dies. The poet ends the reign with praises of Mahmúd.

#### NOTE

§ 1. The forty years and two months assigned by Firdausi to the reign of Ardshír (Artaxerxes I., A.D. 226-241) is much too long. Tabarí makes it, from the fall of Ardawán, fourteen years or, according to some of his authorities, ten months longer.<sup>1</sup> No doubt Ardshír was a king, with his seat of government at Párs, from soon after the death of his father Pápak.<sup>2</sup> Probably he served, and won his spurs, in Ardawán's war against the Romans which was ended by the peace of Nisibis in A.D. 217. Nine eventful years followed and he became King of kings in A.D. 226. Firdausi, according to the text of C, makes him seventy-eight, according to the text of P sixty-eight, at the time of his death.<sup>3</sup>

There had been a city of Baghdád in Babylonian times, but the Arab city of that name was not founded till the days of the Khalifa Al Mansúr in A.D. 762. The city here meant is Bih-Ardshír, the Selencia newly founded by Ardshír.<sup>4</sup>

We have two accounts of the assumption of the title "King of kings" by Ardshír. For the other see p. 273. From Firdausi's

<sup>1</sup> NT, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 286.

<sup>4</sup> NT, p. 16, and *not.*

wording it might be held that the former was the popular, the latter the official, ascription of the title. For its import in connexion with Ardashir see p. 197. Cf. too p. 199.

§§ 2, 3. Firdausi's account agrees partly with the Kárnámak and partly with the Arabic versions, showing clearly that the former was not his direct authority. According to K two of Ardawán's sons had fled to Kābul and thence incited Ardawán's daughter, whose name is given as Zijānak, to poison Ardashir, her husband. One day accordingly, on his return from the chase, she presents to him a cup of roast meal and milk with which she has mingled the poison. As he was about to drink, the sacred Fire, Friibā, descended on the cup and it fell from his hand. A cat and dog ate the spilt food and died on the spot. Ardashir at once ordered the high priest (the chief mubid) to have Zijānak put to death. Instead of so doing, however, he concealed her in his own house, where she gave birth to a son whom she called Shāpūr, *i.e.* son of the king, and brought him up till he was seven years old. The story of the self-mutilation by the high priest is omitted.<sup>1</sup> One day Ardashir went to the chase and followed a female onager, whereupon the male came towards Ardashir and exposed himself to death in her stead. Ardashir spared him and rode after the colt, whereat the female onager came up and offered herself to be slain in her young one's place. Ardashir, reflecting on his own conduct to his wife, whom he knew to have been with child at the time when he ordered her to execution, wept. The high priest seized the opportunity to tell Ardashir the real state of the case, and Shāpūr is presented to him. Ardashir in great joy bounteously rewards the high priest and founds the city of Rās-Shāpūr and a sacred Fire in commemoration of the occasion.<sup>2</sup> According to Tabarī, when Ardashir had obtained the sovereignty he destroyed utterly, in accordance to an oath sworn by his grandsire, the elder Sāsān, the royal race of the Arsacids<sup>3</sup> with the exception of one girl, Ardawán's daughter, whom he found in the royal palace. She was very beautiful, and, as she gave herself out to be merely the handmaid of one of Ardawán's wives, he married her. Later on, thinking herself secure, as she was with child by him, she told him who she was. On this he ordered his minister, an

<sup>1</sup> A similar story is told by Lucian in his treatise on "The Syrian Goddess" of Seleucus Nicator, his queen Stratonice, and one of his favourites—a handsome youth named Combabus—and by Huen T'siang of the younger brother of a king of K'iu-chi who was left in charge of the government while the king himself went on pilgrimage. BBR, i. 22.

<sup>2</sup> NK, pp. 57 *seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Historically this is incorrect. See p. 202.

aged man, to put her to death,<sup>1</sup> and then follows the rest of the story as told in the Sháhnáma. All these accounts make Shápúr much too young. According to Tabarí he was present at the battle of Hurmuzdagán and slew with his own hand Ardawán's secretary.<sup>2</sup> Tabarí thus appears to contradict himself, but the reader should bear in mind that it is the custom of Oriental historians to give several versions, derived from different sources, of the same event or person, not to digest such versions, as a Western writer would do, into a single narrative.

A similar account of the rewards bestowed by the grateful Ardashir on his faithful minister is given by Dinawarí and in some versions of the Persian translation of Tabarí, but there is no evidence that the statement that Ardashir had his minister's head engraved and stamped on the coinage is historically correct. It is true that another head besides Ardashir's appears on his earliest and some of his latest coins, but the heads are those of Pápak and of Shápúr respectively.<sup>3</sup>

The Jund-i-Shápúr of F appears to be the equivalent of the Rás-Shápúr of K.<sup>4</sup>

§§ 4-6. This is both in K and in the Arabic versions. In F the wise Indian king of the days of Sikandar—Kaid, the Kait of K—reappears, takes the place held by the astrologers in Tabarí, and, in K, declares that only two races can hold sway in Irán—that of Ardashir and that of Mihrak.<sup>5</sup> F more poetically puts it that the Sháh can only find peace by the *union* of his family with that of Mihrak. On this Ardashir, aware that one daughter of Mihrak had escaped the previous massacre, tries in vain to find her. It seems worth suggesting that, in the primitive form of the legend, Ardawán, Mihrak, and Máhdik were one and the same personality. Mihrak is Mithrak in K, a very Parthian name, and Máhdik or Máhdik is the king of the Kurds. Máhdik merely means "the Mede" and thus symbolises the Parthian power which, according to Iránian tradition, had its headquarters in Media Magna. In this view Ardashir's expeditions against the Kurds and Mihrak would be mere variants of his advance into, and conquest of, Media after the decisive battle of Hurmuzdagán when doubtlessly he put to death all that he could find of his late rival's family. That he wittingly spared any of them, male or female, is most unlikely, and a legend given in Tabarí<sup>6</sup> had to be invented to explain how it came about that he married Ardawán's daughter, the story of this marriage being a later device, as here in Shápúr's

<sup>1</sup> NT, pp. 25 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* 30 *note*, and RSM, pp. 65 *seq.*

<sup>4</sup> NK p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> NT, p. 43: NK, p. 64.

<sup>6</sup> See p. 255.



case, to connect the Sāsānians with their predecessors. It is worth noting too that in the Arabic historian Hamza the daughter of Mihrak is called Kurdzād, *i.e.* "the child of the Kurds."<sup>1</sup> This explains the words of Kait's prophecy in K and, what is hard to understand otherwise, why such great importance should be attached to Mihrak and his family in the various versions of the legends unless we regard them as all originating from a single historical incident in Ardashir Pāpakān's career. F's insight in varying the form of Kaid's prophecy brings out the historical truth that Irān could be restored to internal peace only by the voluntary union of the old and new political dispensations.

The scene at the well between Shāpūr and the daughter of Mihrak is not found in the Arabic versions. In Tabarī the girl takes refuge with shepherds and provides Shāpūr with water one day when he is hunting. He falls in love with her and takes her in marriage, after which she tells him of her parentage. The Arabic versions, both in this case and that of Ardashir, represent the marriage into the enemy's family as having been made through ignorance.<sup>2</sup>

The recognition scene on the polo-ground, which we have had already in connexion with Shāpūr,<sup>3</sup> here occurs, as in K, in its proper place. F adds the touch of Ardashir's unexpected return from the chase and consequent discovery. In Tabarī it is brought about by a sudden visit paid to his son's palace by Ardashir who thus encounters Urmuzd.<sup>4</sup>

At this point K, after giving a brief and exaggerated account of the reign of Urmuzd, comes to an end.

§§ 7, 8, 10. In addition to K there was once in existence a Pahlavī work known as the "Ahdnāmak" or "Andarznāmak" *i.e.* "Book of the Exhortations" *et.* of Ardashir. In all probability its contents much resembled the subject-matter found in these sections.<sup>5</sup>

Tabarī states that Ardashir himself crowned his son Shāpūr,<sup>6</sup> and the incident seems to be recorded in a bas-relief of Ardashir's at Takht-i-Būstān and in some of his later coins.<sup>7</sup> Mas'ūdī says that Ardashir became a religious recluse.<sup>8</sup>

The duration of the Sāsānian dynasty was 425 years—A.D. 226–651. *Cf.* with Ardashir's prophecy the account of Mas'ūdī on p. 251, and for the length of his reign p. 254. Tabarī<sup>9</sup> credits him with the foundation of eight cities.

<sup>1</sup> NK, p. 65, *note*.

<sup>2</sup> NT, pp. 26, 44.

<sup>3</sup> p. 263.

<sup>4</sup> NT, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> NK, pp. 26, 27.

<sup>6</sup> NT, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> RSM, pp. 64 *et* q.

<sup>8</sup> MM, ii. 159.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

## § 1

*How Ardshír Pápakán sat upon the Throne  
in Baghdád*

Now at Baghdád Ardshír assumed his seat  
Upon the ivory throne and donned the crown  
That maketh glad the heart, with girdle girt,  
The sceptre of the Sháhs in hand, the palace  
Prepared. Thenceforth folk called him "King of  
kings,"<sup>1</sup>

C. 1392 And no one knew him from Gushtásp. Whenas  
He donned the crown of majesty he spake,  
Victorious and glad, upon the throne  
Thus: "Justice is my treasure in this world,  
Which is reviving 'neath my busy hands.  
A treasure this that none can take from me;  
Ill-doing 'tis that bringeth ill on men.  
All-holy God, if I find favour with Him,  
Will not begrudge to me this sombre earth.  
The world is wholly under my protection,  
My policy is to approve of justice.  
None—friend or foe—must slumber with his heart  
All care through act of any officer,  
Or chief, or warrior-cavalier of mine:  
This court is free to all, both foe and friend."

The whole assembly blessed him and exclaimed:—  
"Oh! may thy justice make earth prosperous!"

Where there were hostile chiefs he sent forth  
troops  
To bring them to submission or make known  
The usage of the scimitar and throne.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. I p. 193, 197, 199, 254, 273.

§ 2

*The Case of Ardashír and the Daughter of Ardawán*

Now when the Sháh slew Ardawán, thus winning  
 The world, he took to wife the slain king's daughter  
 To tell him where her father's hoards were hidden.  
 There were two sons of Ardawán in Hind,  
 Companions in distress, and two in ward  
 With full hearts and with weeping eyes. The eldest  
 Of these—Bahman—who was in Hindústán,  
 Perceiving that the realm was lost to him,  
 Chose a discreet and prudent messenger,  
 A youth who was possessed of ears to hear,  
 Gave him some poison secretly, and said :—  
 “Go to my sister, tell her: ‘Seek not thou  
 Our foe's affections, for in Hindústán  
 Thou hast two brothers, exiles both, and two  
 Bound in the prison-house of Sháh Ardashír.  
 Our sire is slain, his sons are pierced, by arrows,  
 And thou, as it would seem, hast ceased to love us!  
 How can the Maker of the sky commend it?  
 As thou wouldst queen it in Írán, and win  
 In this world the approval of the brave,  
 Take thou this mortal Indian bane and use it  
 Forthwith upon Ardashír.’”

The envoy came

At eve and gave the noble girl that message.  
 Her soul and heart burned for her brother's sake,  
 Her heart was all a-flame. She took the bane  
 To do his will. Now Sháh Ardashír one day  
 Went forth to hunt and shoot the onager,  
 Returned at noon and visited the daughter  
 Of Ardawán. That moon-faced lady ran,  
 And proffered to the Sháh a topaz cup  
 Full of cold water, sugar, and fine meal,

C. 1393

And mixed therewith the bane to please Bahman.  
 As Sháh Ardshír received the cup it fell  
 Out of his hand and shivered on the ground.  
 The queen shook with affright, her heart was riven.  
 Her agitation made the Sháh suspect,  
 Who, doubting what the turning sky would bring,  
 Enjoined a slave to fetch four fowls. They thought  
 That his surmise was false. but when the birds  
 Were put down to the meal they ate and died !  
 Thus certified the pious monarch summoned  
 An archimage—his minister—and said :—  
 “ If thou shouldst seat a foe upon thy throne,  
 Who by thy kindness groweth so bemused  
 As rashly to lay hand upon thy life,  
 What is the punishment for one so raised,  
 How shall we remedy our own default ? ”

The archimage replied : “ If any subject  
 Attempt the world-lord's life thou must behead  
 The guilty and accept no other counsel.”

Thereat the Sháh commanded : “ Make the daughter  
 Of Ardawán a corpse.”

The archimage  
 Went out behind the queen, who quaked convicted,  
 But said : “ O sage ! my day and thine will pass.  
 I cannot say thee nay if thou wilt slay me,  
 But—I am now with child, and by Ardshír :  
 So if 'tis right to cause my blood to flow,  
 And gibbet me on high, wait till my babe  
 Be born, then carry out the Sháh's behest.”

The shrewd archimage returned and told his master.  
 But he made answer : “ Hearken not to her,  
 But do my bidding.”

“ 'Tis an evil day,”

The archimage reflected, “ when such orders  
 Come from the Sháh : We all, both young and old,  
 Must die, and he is sonless ! Though he live

To count unnumbered years yet when he dieth  
 A foe will have his throne. Well may I dare  
 To substitute high policy for such  
 A feckless action. I will save her life.  
 I may induce him to repent or else  
 Can do his bidding when her child is born."

He got apartments ready in his palace  
 That he might tend her as his soul and body,  
 And told his wife: "I would not have a breath  
 Of air behold her."

Then "I have," he thought.  
 "Foes and to spare, and doubts for good or ill  
 Attach to every one, so I will take  
 Such order that no slanderer shall foul  
 My stream."

He went his way and gelt himself.  
 Used cautery and drugs and bandages,  
 Then put his genitals in salt forthwith,  
 As swift as smoke enclosed them in a casket.  
 And sealed it up. With pallid face and groaning  
 He came before the lofty throne, laid down  
 The casket closed and sealed, and said: "Now let  
 The Sháh entrust this to his treasurer  
 With an inscription thereupon to state  
 The matters appertaining and the date."

### § 3

*How Shápúr was born to Ard-shír by the Daughter of Ardawán,  
 and how after seven Years Ard-shír heard of his Son and  
 acknowledged him*

Now, when the time of birth drew near, the archmage  
 Told not the secret e'en to the air. The daughter  
 Of Ardawán brought forth a son—one ardent  
 And with the royal mien. The minister

Excluded all folk, named the babe Shápúr,<sup>1</sup>  
 And hid him seven years till he became  
 A king in looks, in mien, and Grace. It chanced  
 One day that the wazír drew near, perceived  
 Tears on Ardshír's face, and addressed him thus :—  
 "O Sháh ! successful art thou yet thy soul  
 Is fed on care ! In this world thou hast gained  
 Thy full desire and cast thy foeman's head  
 Down from the throne. Now is the time for mirth  
 And quaffing wine, not for solicitude.  
 Earth's seven climes are 'neath thy sway, and thine  
 Are troops and state and policy."

C. 1395

He answered :—

"O holy archimage and confidant !  
 Our scimitar hath justified the age,  
 Grief, travail, and distress have passed away.  
 My years amount to fifty-one, my hairs  
 Once musk are camphor, and my roses gone.  
 I ought to have a son before me now,  
 A joy of heart, a source of strength, a guide.  
 A sonless sire is like a sireless son,  
 And taken only to a stranger's breast.  
 A foe succeedeth to my crown and wealth,  
 And all my gains are travail, pains, and dust."

Then thought that shrewd old man : "'Tis time to  
 speak."

He said : "O Sháh ! who cherishest thy lieges  
 Magnanimous, shrewd-hearted, and supreme !  
 If thou wilt promise me to spare my life  
 I will remove my lord's distress."

The Sháh

Replied : "O sage ! why shouldst thou fear for that ?  
 Say what thou knowest and enlarge thereon,  
 For what is better than a wise man's words ?"

He made reply : "Pure and shrewd-hearted Sháh !

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* Sháh's son.

I gave a casket to thy treasurer :  
Now let the Sháh vouchsafe to ask for it."

The Sháh said to his treasurer : " He asketh  
For that which he consigned to thy safe keeping.  
Restore it that we may examine it,  
And haply cease to live a life of care."

The treasurer produced and gave the casket  
Back to the minister. The Sháh inquired :—  
" What is there in it under lock and seal ? "

He made reply : " The blood of mine affliction,  
And parts of shame dissevered by the roots.  
To me thou gavest Ardawán's own daughter  
Until thou shouldst require her corpse of me.  
I slew her not because she was with child,  
And I feared God, but sacrificed my manhood,  
When thou didst give that order. and cut off  
My parts of shame that none might slander me,  
Or plunge me into infamy. Thy son  
Hath been in keeping of thy minister  
Seven years. No other king hath son like him,  
And his sole semblance is the moon in heaven.  
In love I gave to him the name Shápúr,  
And may his fortune jubilate the sky.  
His mother too is with him, educating  
The prince her son."

The world's king marvelled at him,  
Began to muse upon that child, then said :—

" O shrewd of heart and well advised ! much toil  
Hast thou endured ! I will not let it age  
With thee. Select a hundred of his years.  
Like him in face and stature, breast and limb,  
And all in like garb, neither worse nor better.  
Send them to play at polo on the ground,  
And furnish balls. When those fair youths are there  
My soul will yearn for love upon my child,  
My heart will be a witness to the truth,

And make me know my son."

At break of day

The minister arrived and brought the boys  
In dress, in stature, and in mien so like  
As not to be distinguished. Thou hadst said :—  
· A holiday is toward in the park,  
And prince Shápúr is in the thick of it,"  
For when the youth began to play he bore  
The ball off from the rest so that Ardshír,  
On coming to the ground, accompanied  
By young and old, and looking at the boys,  
Could from his bosom heave a deep, cold sigh,  
Could point his son out to his minister,  
And say: "Behold a young Ardshír is yonder!"

The counsellor replied: "O Sháh! thy heart  
Hath testified to thine own son, but wait  
Till yon fair children drive the ball anear thee."

Then Sháh Ardshír bade an attendant: "Go,  
And drive the ball from them that I may see  
Which boy will come forth bravely midst the brave,  
As though a lion, and bear off the ball  
Before my very eyes, regarding none  
Of all this company, for such will be,  
Past doubt, my very son in blood and body,  
In limbs and race."

The servant did his bidding,  
And drove the ball before the cavaliers.  
The boys as swift as arrows followed it,  
But, when they neared Ardshír, came to a stand,  
Albeit unwillingly. Shápúr alone,  
That Lion, still came on, seized, and bore off  
The ball before his sire, and then, withdrawing,  
Restored it to the boys. The Sháh's heart joyed,  
As when an old man groweth young again,  
The horsemen raised the young prince from the ground,  
And passed him on from hand to hand until



The king of kings could clasp him to the breast,  
 And bless the Judge of all. He kissed Shápúr  
 On head and face and eyes, and said: "Such wonders  
 Should not be hidden. I ne'er dreamed of this, C. 1397  
 For I presumed him slain just as God greatened  
 My kingship and increased my monuments  
 Within the world! Thou canst not shun His bidding  
 Though thou shouldst raise thy head above the sun."

He called for gold and many precious stones  
 Out of his treasury. They poured them forth  
 And sifted <sup>1</sup> musk and ambergris withal  
 Upon Shápúr until his head was hidden  
 With gold, and none could see his face for jewels.  
 The Sháh heaped gems too on his minister,  
 Set him upon a seat inlaid with gold,  
 And gave him wealth enough to furnish all  
 His house and halls. The Sháh then bade the daughter  
 Of Ardawán to go in peace and joy  
 Back to the palace, pardoned all her fault,  
 And cleansed his Moon of rust. He had all men  
 Of parts within the city brought to teach  
 The boy to write the ancient tongue, to wear  
 The mien of royal haughtiness, to wheel  
 His steed in battle, and thus mounted show  
 His spear-point to the enemy, to quaff,  
 Give largess, entertain at feasts, array  
 The host, and all the toil and work of war.  
 He had a new die struck for all the coinage  
 Both gold and silver, large and small alike;  
 On one side was his own name, on the other  
 That of his great wazír—one held in honour  
 As an experienced man and counsellor.  
 Both names appeared on documents. The Sháh  
 Gave him the ring, the signet, and the rule,  
 Bestowed a treasure on the poor that lived

<sup>1</sup> Reading with T.

By labour, chose a site where brambles grew,  
And made thereof a jocund seat, its name  
Jund-i-Shápúr, thus only known to fame.

## § 4

*How Ardshír, to find out the Future of his Reign, sent  
to Kaid of Hind, and Kaid's Reply*

Shápúr grew cypress-tall and, since they feared  
The evil eye, was ever with Ardshír.  
Attending like wazír and minister.

C. 1398      The Sháh had not a day's repose from warfare,  
Or leisure to disport himself, for when  
He had relieved a place of enemies  
They rose elsewhere. He said: "I pray the Maker,  
Both publicly and privily, that I  
May hold earth free from foes and then become  
A devotee."

His glorious minister  
Replied: "O Sháh, whose heart is bright, whose words  
Are true! dispatch we an ambassador  
To Kaid of Hind who is a man of knowledge,  
And good at need, can estimate high heaven,  
And tell the door of joy, the road to ruin.  
He will divine, accounting it no toil,  
Nor asking guerdon for his answering.  
If thou without a rival wilt possess  
The seven climes."

On hearing this the Sháh  
Chose him a high-born youth of ready wit  
To go as envoy to the sage of Hind,  
With many steeds, with gold, and silk of Chín,  
And said to him: "Go to the sage and say:—  
O man of fortune and of truthful speech!

Find from the stars when I shall rest from war,  
And win me full possession of the realm,  
For if I must be evermore in toil  
I will not be so lavish of my treasure.'"

The envoy came to Kaid with gifts and largess,  
And gave the message of the king of kings,  
Explaining all. Kaid greeted him, grew grave,  
Turned to his arts, brought forth his astrolabe,  
Observed the stars, and placed upon his lap  
An Indian planisphere to ascertain  
High heaven's purpose touching peace, success.  
Woe, and mishap, and then informed the envoy:—

"I have discerned the fortunes of Írán,  
And of the Sháh. If he will blend with his  
The offspring of Mihrak, son of Núshzád,  
The Sháh will sit in peace upon his throne,  
And need not send his armies anywhither,  
His wealth will wax, his travail wane. Depart.  
Weigh not these two realms' feud.<sup>1</sup> Írán will prove  
Conformable when this hath been achieved,  
And he will compass all his heart's desire."

He gave the envoy gifts, and said: "My sayings  
Must not be hidden. If he shall obey,  
High heaven will give him cause to prize my  
words."

The envoy went back to the Sháh and told  
What he had heard from noble Kaid, whereat  
Ardshír was vexed, his visage grew like gall.  
He answered: "God forbid that I should see  
Descendants from Mihrak and bring my foe  
Out of the street inside my house to war  
Against my realm! Woe for my lavished treasure,

C. 1399

<sup>1</sup> We must suppose that the troubles of the Sháh arose from the fact that two of the sons of Ardlawán had taken refuge in Hind which, either directly or indirectly, was assisting them and their adherents in Írán. P reads "between these two families," i.e. the rival dynasties of Ardsbir and Ardawán.

Mine expeditions sent, and labours borne!  
 Mihrak hath but one daughter left, and none  
 Hath seen her. I will bid men search for her  
 In Rúm, in Hind. in Chín, and in Taráz,  
 And when I find her I will have her burned,  
 And make the dust lament for her with tears."

He sent one skilful in pursuit of foes,  
 And horsemen also. to Jahram. Now when  
 The daughter of Mihrak heard this she fled,  
 And lay concealed within a house ten months.  
 While she was hidden with a village-chieftain,  
 Who held her in high honour, she grew up  
 Like some straight cypress and increased in wisdom,  
 In Grace, and beauty; not a peer had she;  
 The realm had not so tall a cypress-tree.

### § 5

*The Adventure of Shápúr with the Daughter of Mihrak,  
 and his taking her to Wife*

Within a little while the monarch's fortune  
 Grew bright. He went to hunt at dawn one day  
 With wise Shápúr. The horsemen ranged around,  
 And cleared the plain of game. A spacious seat  
 Appeared afar with garth, park, hall, and palace.  
 Shápúr rode on until he reached the village,  
 And halted at the mansion of the chief.  
 There was a pleasant garth inside the walls,  
 A verdant spot, and when the youth went in  
 He saw a maiden like the moon, who plied  
 A wheel and bucket at a well. Now when  
 She saw Shápúr she came and showered blessings:—  
 "Be happy, smiles and joy be thine, and all  
 Thy years unscathed! Thy courser is athirst,

No doubt, and all the water in the village  
Is brackish, but in this well cold and sweet.  
With thy permission I will water him."

Shápúr replied: "What words are these, fair  
maid!

I have attendants; they shall draw the water."

The maiden turned her back upon the youth:  
She went apart and sat beside a stream.

He bade a servant: "Bring a bowl and draw."

The attendant heard and ran: rope, wheel, and  
bucket

C. 1400

Were there, but when the bucket sank and filled  
It rose not though he strove with knitted brows,  
So heavy was it. Chidingly Shápúr  
Came up, and said to him: "Why, thou half woman!  
Did not a woman work rope, wheel, and bucket?  
She pumpeth what she will but thou art pumped,  
And askest help!"

He took the rope himself,  
But found the work severe. Discovering  
The bucket's weight he praised that fair-cheeked  
maid,

And said: "Good sooth, she is of royal race  
To raise a bucket of such weight as this!"

When he had drawn the bucket up the damsel  
Came and saluted him most graciously.  
And said: "Live happily while time endureth.  
May wisdom ever be thy monitor.  
The virtue of Shápúr, son of Ardshír,  
Could doubtless turn the water in the well  
To milk!"

He said to that sweet-spoken maid:—  
"How know'st thou, moon-face! that I am Shápúr?"

She answered him: "Full often have I heard  
This saying from the lips of truthful men:—  
'The brave Shápúr is like an elephant

In strength, as bounteous as the river Nile,  
 In height a cypress, with a frame of brass,  
 And like Bahman in all.' ”<sup>1</sup>

He said : “ O moon-face !  
 Tell truly what I ask. Declare thy stock,  
 Because thy mien is royal.”

She replied :—

“ The daughter of the village-chieftain I,  
 From whom I get my comeliness and strength.”

“ Lies never pass with princes,” he rejoined,  
 “ A tiller of the soil would not possess  
 A moon-faced daughter, fair, all scent and hue.”

“ O prince,” she said, “ when life is guaranteed me,  
 I will inform thee fully of my birth,  
 Safe from the anger of the king of kings.”

He said : “ Revenge on friends is not a plant  
 That groweth in our garden, so say on,  
 And fear not me or our just, noble Sháh.”

“ The very truth is that I am,” she said,  
 “ The daughter of Mihrak, son of Núshzád.  
 A pious person brought me as a child.  
 And gave me to this worthy village-chief;  
 So now, for fear of the illustrious Sháh,  
 I draw the water and do other chars.”

Shápúr took up his lodging there and, when  
 The village-chief was waiting on him, said :—

C. 1401 “ Give me, with Heaven as witness, this fair maid.”

The village-chief accorded his desire  
 With all the rites of those that worship Fire.

<sup>1</sup> From whom, according to one of the two genealogies in the Sháhnama, the House of Sásán was descended. See p. 199.

## § 6

*How Urmuzd was born to Shápúr by the Daughter  
of Mīhrak*

It came to pass that soon that straight-stemmed  
Cypress,

Like blossom, came to fruit. Shápúr conveyed her  
To his own palace from the chieftain's house,  
And cherished her like some ripe quince.<sup>1</sup> Now when  
Nine months had passed that Moon-face bare a son,  
The image of his sire. Thou wouldst have said:—

“Asfandiyár hath come again or famed  
Ardshír, the cavalier.”<sup>2</sup> The prince, his sire.  
Named him Urmuzd, for he was like a cypress  
Midst herbs, and after seven years possessed  
No equal in the world. His parents hid him,  
And never let him go abroad to play.

Once when Ardshír went hunting for a week,  
As did Shápúr withal, Urmuzd escaped  
Unnoticed, weary of his tasks, and ran  
Forth to the riding-ground of Sháh Ardshír.  
A lasso in one hand and in the other  
Two shafts, with other boys with balls and sticks,  
Just as the world-lord with his retinue.  
And with his shrewd high priest, came from the chase.  
When he was nigh the ground one of the youths  
Smote strongly and awry so that the ball  
Rolled near the Sháh. None followed it, the boys  
Stopped short, balked in their game, except Urmuzd  
Who, rushing like a blast before the Sháh,  
Bare off the ball before his grandsire's face,

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is inserted from P.

<sup>2</sup> Probably Sháh Bahman is meant. Cf. previous note and Vol. v.  
p. 282.

Amid the soldiers' hue and cry, and shouted,  
 So that the conquering Sháh was all amazement :—  
 "The sticks, the riding-ground, and pluck are mine.  
 And mine it is to battle with the brave!"

Thus to the archmage said Ardshír: "Inquire  
 About the lineage of this noble youth."

The archmage asked. None knew, or would not say.  
 "Take up the youth and bring him," said the king.

The archmage went and raised him from the dust,  
 Then bare him to the Sháh of noble men,  
 Who said: "Illustrious child! what is thy stock?"

C. 1402 He answered in loud tones: "My name and race  
 Should not be hidden: thy son's son am I—  
 Shápúr's—born from the daughter of Mihrak."

The monarch of the world was in amaze  
 Thereat, smiled, mused, bade come Shápúr, and asked  
 Questions past count. Shápúr, that noble man,  
 Was terrified, his heart was sorrowful,  
 His cheek was wan. The great Sháh smiled on him.  
 And said: "Hide not thy child; we need a son,  
 And whencesoe'er he cometh, it is well,  
 Since, so they say, he is a prince's child."

Shápúr replied: "Be blest and with thy looks  
 Sustain the world! He cometh from my loins,  
 And he is named Urmuzd; he shineth like  
 A tulip midst the grass. I have awhile  
 Concealed him from the king until the fruit-tree  
 Should bring forth fruit. The daughter of Mihrak  
 Bare this illustrious child, who is my child  
 Beyond all doubt."

Then, while his father listened  
 He told at large what happened at the well.

Ardshír rejoiced to hear the tale and went  
 Back to the palace with his minister,  
 Embraced that darling child, then sought his throne.  
 He had a golden ante-throne prepared,



And bade bring torque and golden coronet  
Wherewith they decked the young child's head, then  
    fetched

Both gold and jewels from the treasury,  
And heaped them till the boy's head disappeared,  
Whereat his grandsire drew him from the heap.  
Bestowed the gold and jewels on the poor,  
And still more splendid presents on the sages,  
Decked with brocade the Fire-fanes and the hall  
Wherein were held Naurúz, and Sada-feast.<sup>1</sup>  
Made ready with his lords a banquet-house,  
Placed minstrels everywhere, and then addressed  
The land's wise chieftains: "Never should one slight  
The sayings of a learned astrologer,  
For thus said Kaid of Hind: 'Ne'er will thy fortune,  
Thy throne, thy realm, thy crown, thy treasure, host,  
Thy royal diadem, thy Grace, and state,  
Be glad and jocund till the families  
Of thee and of Mihrak, son of Núshzād,  
Shall be conjoined in blood.' For eight years now  
The sky hath blessed our wishes. Ever since  
Urmuzd was added to my peace the world  
Hath granted what I would, earth's seven climes  
All have been ordered, and my heart hath had  
Its will of fortune."

    All his underlings  
Gave him thenceforth the style of "King of kings."<sup>2</sup>

§ 7

*Of the Wisdom of Ardashír and his Method of administering the Realm*

Now hear and learn the wisdom of Ardashír.  
Who toiled, gave virtue vogue, and everywhere

C. 1403

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. pp. 74, 123.  
VOL. VI.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 254.  
S

Spread love and justice. As his forces grew  
 At court he sent his agents to all parts  
 To say: "Let none of you that hath a son  
 Allow him to grow up in ignorance,  
 But teach him horsemanship and how to fight  
 With mace and bow and shafts of poplar-wood."

A youth, when trained to strength and grown  
 efficient,  
 Would come up from his province to the court,  
 The Sháh's famed court, and then the muster-master  
 Would have him registered and give him quarters.  
 These young recruits, when war broke out, went forth  
 Commanded by some paladin, some archmage  
 Among the officials anxious to excel,  
 One to each thousand youths. He went with them  
 To note their dispositions—cowardly,  
 Or too infirm for war—and to report  
 On all by letter to the king of kings,  
 Who when he had perused it and received  
 The messenger, would have a robe of honour  
 Of what was choicest in the treasury  
 Prepared for those that showed accomplishment;  
 But non-effectives carried arms no more.  
 Thus grew his troops so many that they passed  
 The purview of the stars, and men of counsel  
 Received promotion at his hands. A herald  
 Used to make circuit of the host, proclaiming:—  
 "Ye men of name and warriors of the Sháh!  
 Whoe'er hath sought for favour in his sight,  
 And washed earth with the blood of valiant men,  
 Shall have from me a royal gift and leave  
 His fame as his memorial."

He ordered  
 The whole world with his troops, a shepherd he  
 With soldiers for his flock.

He kept a staff

Of experts in his public offices,  
 Committing naught to those incompetent.  
 They made a point of style and penmanship,  
 And when one showed superiority,  
 And when his principal reported it,  
 The king of kings increased for him his pay.  
 The second-rate served not the Sháh himself,  
 But gave assistance to his officers ;  
 He only kept the scribes that were adepts,  
 And, when he saw such, he would praise them, saying :—  
 “ A scribe that filleth up the treasury  
 And by his talent lesseneth toil, availeth  
 State, host, and subjects pleading for redress.  
 The scribes are as the sinews of my soul,  
 And monarchs in disguise.”

C. 1404

When governors  
 Went to their provinces he used to charge them :—  
 · Hold money vile and sell no man for pelf,  
 Because this Hostel bideth not with any,  
 But seek for wisdom and all righteousness ;  
 Let greed and madness be afar from thee,  
 And take none of thy kith and kin : the troops  
 That I have given thee are friends enough.  
 Give largess monthly to the poor, but naught  
 To foes. If by thy justice thou shalt make  
 Thy province prosper thou wilt prosper too  
 And joy in justice. but if any poor  
 Sleep there in fear thou sellest thine own soul  
 For gold and silver.”

All that came to court  
 On state affairs, or to require redress.  
 Were met by trusty henchmen of the Sháh,  
 And asked about the royal governors :—  
 “ Are they just men or covetous ? Do any  
 Lie wronged by them ? What learned men are there ?  
 Are any faint through want ? Would any be

Of service to the Sháh as being old  
 And veteran, or devout? The king of kings  
 Saith: 'Let my toils and treasure gladden none  
 Except the men of wisdom and of lore,  
 For what is better than one wise and aged?  
 I seek experienced men and youths approved,  
 And patient, for if youths are wise and apt  
 To learn they fittingly replace the old.' "

As often as his host went forth to war  
 He acted prudently and cautiously,  
 And chose some scribe—a wise, learned, heedful man—  
 And charged him with a courteous embassy  
 Lest there be unjust strife. The envoy used  
 To visit the Sháh's foe to learn his case,  
 And list to him if he were wise and held  
 War's sorrows, toils, and ills calamities.

C. 1405

If so he would have presents from the Sháh,  
 With grant, with patent, and remembrances;  
 But if he had a wrathful head, a heart  
 Revengeful, and blood boiling in his liver.  
 The Sháh would give the host a donative,  
 That no one might be malcontent, appoint  
 Some paladin aspiring, watchful, wise,  
 And placable. and therewithal a scribe—  
 A man of precedent and mastery—  
 To keep watch that the soldiers did no wrong;  
 Then mounted on an elephant a man,  
 Whose voice could reach two miles, thus to proclaim:—  
 "Ye chieftains of the fray, brave, famed, and bold!  
 No harm must come on poor or rich and noble.  
 Pay for your provand at each stage and earn  
 My subjects' thanks, and let God's worshippers  
 Touch not another's goods. Whoe'er shall show  
 The foe his back his outlook will be gloomy.  
 Because his grave will be at hand, or chains  
 Will gall his neck and breast, or else his name

Will be struck off the roll, and he himself  
Will feed on dust and on dark dust repose."

Then he would charge the captain of the host:—  
"Be neither slack nor rash to attack, keep always  
The elephants in front and push out scouts  
Four miles. Be instant, when a fight is toward,  
To go among the troops, bid them remember  
Both who and what they are, why in the field:—  
'They are a hundred horsemen to our one  
And yet their hundred to our one are few!'  
For every one of you, both young and old,  
I shall receive a present from Ardshír.'  
When cavaliers advance upon both sides  
Let not thy warriors, in their eagerness  
To fight, press on till they expose the centre.  
However large the host. Dispose thy left  
Against the foe's right wing that all may have  
A chance of fighting and array thy right  
Against his left. Let all look to their baggage.  
The centre must stand fast, let no one there  
Advance a foot; but if the opposing centre  
Advance, advance thine own. When thou hast  
triumphed  
Forbear to shed the blood of foes in flight,  
While, if they ask for quarter, grant it them.  
And be not vengeful. When thou seest the foe  
Retreat, haste not to quit thine own position,  
Or deem thyself secure from ambuscade,  
But, once thou art assured, see that thou heed not  
Another's words. Bestow the spoil on those  
That sought the fray and bravely washed their hearts  
Of love of life, and bring withal all captives  
Without fail to my court. I will erect them  
A city where a thorn-brake stood.<sup>1</sup> As thou  
Wouldst live unvexed and scathless turn in naught

C. 1406

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

From these my counsellings, and in thy triumphs  
Incline to God because He is past doubt  
Thy guide."

Whenever there arrived an envoy  
From any part, Rúm, Turkistán, or Persia,  
The marchlords got to know it, for they held  
Such things of moment; lodging was provided,  
This was the business of the governors,  
With provand, raiment, and no stint of carpets,  
Upon the route. They would inform themselves  
As to the envoy's business with the Sháh.  
And then a scribe upon a noble beast  
Would go to Sháh Ardshír that troops might meet  
The envoy. Then the conquering Sháh would have  
His throne made ready and attendants ranked  
On either side thereof in cloth of gold,  
Would have the envoy summoned to the presence,  
Seat him beside the throne, greet him, and learn  
His business good or ill, name, and repute,<sup>1</sup>  
His views of right and wrong, about his land,  
About its customs, king, and armaments,  
Conduct him to a palace with the state  
That was befitting an ambassador,  
And furnish what he needed, then invite him  
To feast and revel, seat him by the throne,  
Would take him out on royal hunting-days,  
Escorted by a countless retinue,  
Dismiss him with the forms due to an envoy,  
And fashion him a monarch's robe of honour.

He sent withal archmages to all parts—  
Men wise and shrewd and kindly—to build cities,  
And lavish wealth thereon, that every man  
Resourceless, homeless, and estranged from fortune,  
Might have a living and a dwelling-place,  
And thus increase the number of his subjects.

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

So his good name is current now as then  
Upon the lips and in the thoughts of men,  
And one sole monarch <sup>1</sup> in the world we find  
That now recalleth lost Ardashír to mind,  
And mine 'tis living glory to bestow  
Upon him.<sup>2</sup> May his end all goodness know.

C. 1407

The Shah had many secrets, for he kept  
His agents everywhere. Whene'er the rich  
Grew poor the Sháh would help him, if informed,  
And leave him prosperous with fertile lands,  
Home, slaves, and underlings, arranging all  
Without the city's ken, and put his children,  
If they had talent, in the charge of tutors.  
In every quarter of the towns were schools,  
With colleges for worshippers of Fire.  
He suffered none to want save such as kept  
The fact a secret, and his custom was  
To go at daybreak to the public ground,  
Where all that sought redress could come, and there  
Judged subject and friend's son impartially.  
His justice made the whole world prosperous,  
And all his subjects' hearts rejoiced in him.

When any king to justice is allied,  
In time's despite his footprints will abide.

Observe the policy of this brave chief,  
Who, thou wouldst say, engrossed all excellence.  
His agents, wise and watchful officers,  
Went through the world. Where any land lay waste,  
Or streams ran low, he took the taxes off:  
No holding was too mean for his regard.  
If any thane was poor, and losing all,  
The Sháh supplied both implements and cattle  
And let him not be ousted from his home.

Now hear, O king! the sayings of this sage  
And make the world as bright as in his age;

<sup>1</sup> Mahmúd.<sup>2</sup> Reading with P.

As thou untroubled and unvexed wouldst be,  
 And pile up wealth not gained injuriously,  
 Seek that thy subjects may be unvexed too,  
 And have from all the praises justly due.

In Rúm and Chín, in Turkistán and Hind,  
 The world grew as 'twere Rúman silk to him,  
 Both toll and tax came in continually  
 From all lands, none opposing him. He summoned  
 The nobles of Írán and set those worthy  
 Upon the royal throne, then rose and made  
 Oration to them well and graciously:—

C. 1408 O chieftains of the state, ye that are wise  
 And prudent! know that swiftly turning heaven  
 Assaileth not through justice nor embraceth  
 Through love, but setteth whom it will on high,  
 And then consigneth him to sorry dust;  
 His name alone surviveth, all his toils  
 Go with him to oblivion: one whose aims  
 Are good may leave a good name, naught besides.  
 Now as for thee, Urmuzd! thy lot will be  
 As holy God approveth. Turn and open  
 Thyself to Him who is the Lord of all.  
 And multiplieth good. From every ill  
 Take shelter with the Ruler of the world,  
 For ill and good are in His power, and He  
 Will make all hardship easy to thee, give  
 A bright heart to thee, and victorious fortune.  
 Judge first by mine experience and perpend  
 Mine own past good and evil while still fresh.  
 When I took refuge with the Lord of all  
 My heart was gladdened by the crown and throne.  
 I rule the seven climes for so seemed good  
 To His authority. From Rúm and Hind  
 I take a tribute, and the world hath grown  
 Like Rúman silk to me. Thanks be to God,  
 Who gave me strength, exalted star, and favour



From Sol and Saturn ; yet who knoweth how  
 To praise Him worthily or give Him worship  
 Proportioned to His work so that He may  
 Be mindful of my service and set forth  
 His greatness and omnipotence ? And now  
 What from our sense of justice—our delight—  
 We purpose we will tell. Although one tenth  
 From all communities is due to me  
 As thane and archimage will testify,  
 I ask it not, I give it back to you—  
 The tithe on land and impost on the flocks—  
 Except the tithe on increase which the agent  
 Will pay into our treasury.<sup>1</sup> The tithe,  
 That erst I took, and impost less or more,  
 I have employed on useful works and kept  
 A countless host at court. I sought your good,  
 Your safety, and the abatement of the Faith  
 Of Áhriman. Clasp, all ! your hands to God,  
 Be diligent and break not His behest  
 Who is the Lord and Giver of all things.  
 The Artist of the sky above, the Helper  
 Of the oppressed ; but glory not o'er others  
 By reason of His favour, nor thereby  
 Deceive thy heart, for pride will have a fall.  
 Where are the men whose crowns erst frayed the  
 clouds ?

Where those whose quarry was the mighty lion ?  
 They, all of them, are couched on dust and brick,  
 And he is blest that sowed but seed of good.  
 List, all of you that are within my realm !  
 To these my final counsels. Now will I  
 Point out to you five courses that will profit  
 Far more than throne and treasury, so list,  
 Ye young and old ! the words of famed Ardashir.

C. 1409

<sup>1</sup> " *espérant que vos chefs apporteront dans mon trésor ce que vous aurez de superflu* " (Mohl).

The man who knoweth that the Just One is  
Will worship holy God and Him alone.  
Again, misprize not knowledge, whether thou  
Be liege or lord, and, thirdly, be assured  
That wise men ne'er forget, and, fourthly, know  
That fear of doing wrong availeth more  
Than gibbet, bonds, and dungeon. Fifthly, none  
Approveth of a slanderer's words. To these  
I add one counsel more, a counsel better  
Than eyes and life and goods: blest is the man  
That maketh this world prosper, is the same  
In public and in private, and moreover  
Soft-spoken, modest, wise, and cordial.  
Spend not thy money for the sake of show,  
Or waste it foolishly on vanities,  
Else there will be no profit, none will praise,  
Nor holy men approve, but choose the mean,  
Maintain it, and the wise will call thee prudent.  
Again, there are five ways of making bright  
Thy Faith and conduct, and of furthering  
Thy comfort and thy joy, for in their honey  
There is no bane to harm thee. First of all,  
Seek not to pass by greed or pains the lot  
Assigned to thee by God; the man content  
Is rich, for each spring's blooms have borne him fruit.  
Next, break the neck of greed, and tell no secret  
Before the women. Thirdly, court not war  
And strife, for they bring toil and anguish. Fourthly,  
Seclude thy heart from grief and be not troubled  
O'er ills not come, and, fifthly, meddle not  
With things irrelevant, for know that they  
Are not thy quarry. Hear ye all! my counsel,  
My profitable speech; 'twill be right dear  
To all men's hearts, for they will get thereby  
Security from loss. Pause not from learning  
If thou wouldst fire thy mind. If thou hast children

Have them instructed and cut short their play.  
 Heed, all ! my words and pains on your behalf.  
 Let all the just and shrewd of heart break not  
 Their mutual intercourse, and compass ye  
 Heart's peace in four ways good and profitable :

C. 1410

First, fear, respect, and reverence holy God

That He may be thy Helper and thy Guide ;

- Next, rule thyself and look to thine own skirt,  
 Take God's commands to heart and tender them  
 Like thine own body ; thirdly, make the right

Plain and ban fraud and falsehood : fourthly, swerve  
 not

In thought or action from the Sháh's behest,

But love him like thyself so that thy face

May clear at his command. Confine thy heart

To loyalty to him, let not thy soul

Swerve from his bidding, love him as thy life,

Perceiving that his justice guardeth thee.

The cares of royalty are with the Sháh,

He seeketh the world's gain and not its loss.

If, knowing that his marchlords and his troops

Afflict his realm, he interveneth not

He is no world-lord, and the crown of kingship

Befitteth him not ; he hath blacked out his patent

As king of kings, his Grace is gone.<sup>1</sup> Know this :

An unjust monarch is a ravening lion

Upon the pasture-land ; so is the subject

That heedeth not with diligence and pains

The Sháh's command ; his life will be all grief

And toil, and never will he reach old age

Within this Hostelry. If thou hast need

Of goodness and of greatness thou wilt win them

Not by thine avarice and arrogance.

May all my subjects' hearts be glad, and may

The world too prosper 'neath my righteous sway."

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 208 and *not*.

## § 8

*How Kharrád praised Ardshír*

C. 1411

When Sháh Ardshír resumed his seat, an elder,  
 By name Kharrád, one just in word and thought,  
 Advanced before the throne, thus saying: "O king!  
 Be blest while time endureth, ever glad,  
 And of victorious fortune. May realm, crown,  
 And throne rejoice in thee. Thou hast attained  
 To such an eminence that bird and beast  
 Rank at thy throne, before it and behind.  
 Exalted over all that wear the crown  
 Art thou—the greatest man in all the world.  
 Who can describe thy justice? Thou art based  
 On justice and on greatness. More and more  
 We offer up our praise and thanks to God  
 That we live in thy days and are thy lieges  
 In all things, eager to behold thy face,  
 And yearning for thy gracious words and love.  
 Mayst thou be safe as we are safe through thee,  
 And ne'er may we break fealty. Thou hast barred  
 To us and to our peers the foe's approach  
 From Hind and Chín, and rapine, war, and tumult  
 Have passed away; the shouts of enemies  
 Reach not our ears. Remain for ever happy,  
 And let archmages bear the toils of state.  
 No king is wise as thou, no thought transcendeth  
 Thy counsel, and thou so hast founded justice  
 Within Írán that it will glad our sons.  
 Thy words have grown so potent that thy counsels  
 Make old men young, and all the nobles here  
 Joy in thee and thy justice. Thou increasest  
 The stock of wisdom by thy deeds, the world  
 Hath been illumed by sight of thee. Thou art  
 A robe of honour God-bestowed on fortune,

On girdle, crown, and throne. Still may the Sháh  
 Continue loved and just ; the world hath not  
 A king like thee in mind. The world is safe  
 By reason of thy might and Grace, and blest  
 Are they beneath the shadow of thy wings.  
 For ever be thy seat upon the throne,  
 The world beneath thy word and will alone."

## § 9

*On the Faithlessness of Fortune*

Thou, who the marrow of the tale wouldst win !  
 Divorce thy heart from this old Wayside Inn,  
 • Which hath seen many like to thee and me  
 But with none resteth ; whatsoe'er thou be—  
 King or attendant—it will outstay thee,  
 For be thou drudge, or lord of crown and throne,  
 Thou hast to pack thy baggage and be gone.  
 The sky will melt thee, though of iron mould,  
 And favour thee no more when thou art old ;  
 So when the charming Cypress bendeth low.  
 And when the dark Narcissi overflow,  
 When cheeks of cercis take a saffron hue.  
 And he is grave anon that erst was gay.  
 Then, since souls slumber not as bodies do,  
 Bide not alone, thy mates are on their way.  
 Be thou a monarch or of subject birth  
 Thou'lt have no dwelling-place save darksome earth.  
 Where are the chieftains with their crowns and thrones.

The cavaliers of fortune ever bright ?  
 Where are the sages and the warlike ones,

C. 1412

The princes and the leaders in the fight ?  
 On pillows made of bricks and dust they rest,  
 And he that sowed but seed of good is blest.  
 A great exemplary is king Ardshír,  
 So bear in mind my tale when thou shalt hear.

## § 10

*How Ardashír charged Shápúr and died*

Aged eight and seventy years<sup>1</sup> the watchful world-lord  
 Grew sick ; he knew that death was drawing nigh,  
 That his green leaf would wither, so he summoned  
 Shápúr, addressed him counsel past compute,  
 And said : " Be mindful of my charge, but hold  
 The words of evil speakers merely wind.  
 When thou hast heard my sayings practise them,  
 Discerning haply worth from worthlessness.  
 I with the scimitar of justice righted  
 The world and honoured men of noble birth.  
 That done, the earth waxed but mine own life waned  
 When I had toiled and sweated much, and treasures  
 Had multiplied to me. So now I leave  
 The travail and the pleasure all to thee.  
 We are in turn exalted and abased,  
 Such is the process of the circling sky,  
 Which whiles afflicteth, whiles affecteth, us !  
 Now fortune is a vicious steed, and scath  
 Will wreck thee in prosperity, anon  
 A horse well trained whose neck is arched for thee  
 In all good will. Know, son ! that this false Hostel  
 Hath terrors even for the happy man.  
 Be heedful of thine own and wisdom's case  
 If thou wouldst 'scape ill days. When monarchs honour  
 The Faith then it and royalty are brothers,  
 For they are mingled so that thou wouldst say :—  
 'They wear one cloak.' The Faith endureth not  
 Without the throne nor can the kingship stand  
 Without the Faith ; two pieces of brocade  
 Are they all interwoven and set up

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 254.

Before the wise. The Faith doth need the Sháh,  
 The Sháh, were Faith to seek, would not be praised.  
 Each needeth other. and we see the pair  
 Uniting in beneficence. The man  
 Of Faith will carry off both worlds when he  
 Shall prove a lord of counsel and of wisdom.  
 Whenas the great king watcheth o'er the Faith,  
 Call it and kingship brothers: when he vexeth  
 The pious, call him impious. Disallow  
 In Faith the slanderer of pious kings.  
 What said the man approved and eloquent?  
 'The Faith, if thou considerest, is the brain  
 Of Justice.'<sup>1</sup>

C. 1413

Three things vex the royal throne:  
 The first one is the unjust sovereign,  
 The second, the exalter of the worthless  
 Above the worthy, and the third is he  
 That weddeth treasure and is instant still  
 For more. Be thine aim bounty, Faith, and wisdom,  
 And let no lie pass current for it darkeneth  
 A man's face; ne'er will he be great and famous.  
 See that thou heed not treasure, for dínars  
 Involve mankind in toil. If greed of treasure  
 Possess the great king he will vex his subjects.  
 For where the thane's wealth is there is the Sháh's  
 Who, whatsoe'er the toil and pain may be,  
 Should guard it for him and should bring to fruit  
 His travail's bough. Strive to put wrath away,  
 And boldly blink the faults of other men.  
 If thou art wroth thou wilt repent withal,  
 So, when they make excuse, seek how to salve them.  
 Whene'er the Sháh is wroth the good misprize him,  
 And since he is to blame in seeking ill  
 He should adorn his heart with good. If once  
 Thou sufferest fear to come within thy heart

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 250.

The counsels of thy foes' hearts will prevail.  
 Be boundless too in bounty ; if thou canst,  
 My son ! esteem not wealth. He should be king  
 The limit of whose bounty is the sky.  
 Whenever trouble is a monarch's lot  
 Let him hold counsel with his archimages,  
 Let him inquire too of the right and wrong  
 Thereof, and lay the matter up at heart.

“ On days when thou art purposing to hunt,  
 And use the binding hawk, mix not thy pleasures,  
 As wine and feast with open air and chase :  
 Wine maketh heavy as all leaders know.  
 Abandon such pursuits when foes appear,  
 Spend money freely, edge the swords, and summon  
 The troops of all the realm. Defer not thou  
 The day's work to the morrow and seat not  
 An evil counsellor beside the throne.

C. 1414

Search not the hearts of common folk for truth,  
 For from such questing loss will come to thee,  
 And if they bring ill tidings hearken not,  
 Nor grieve ; they worship neither God nor king,  
 And clutching at their feet thou hast their heads.  
 Such are the common people, but mayst thou  
 Be ever wise. Fear those that compass ill  
 In secret, for this straiteneth the world.  
 Tell naught to confidants for they have theirs,  
 And thou wilt meet thy sayings in the fosse,  
 Or find them spread abroad, and when thy secrets  
 Are common talk the sages will lose patience,  
 Thou wilt be wroth. the sage that calmeth thee  
 Will call thee light of head Seek not for faults  
 In others, that will manifest thine own,  
 While if thy wisdom be o'er swayed by passion  
 The sage will count thee not a man at all.  
 The Sháh and worldlord should be wise that he  
 May be benevolent to every one.



If any man is rash and insolent,  
 Prone to accuse and to calumniate,<sup>1</sup>  
 Let such have no place near to thee although  
 One of thy counsellors. When thou art Sháh  
 Lay down revenge and wrath if thou wouldst have  
 The praises of the pious. He that sitteth  
 Upon the throne of state should be a wise,  
 God-fearing man. Be not a chatterer,  
 Nor make a show of sanctimoniousness  
 In others' eyes. Hear what men say, lay up  
 The best, and note what pleaseth thee; weigh well  
 Thy words to sages, being complaisant  
 And bright to all; scorn not the poor that beg:  
 Seat not an adversary on a throne;  
 Forgive the penitent, requiring not  
 Revenge for what is passed; be just to all,  
 And cherish all; the bounteous, patient man  
 Is blest. What time the foe doth flatter thee  
 Through fear, array the host, bind on the tymbals,  
 And go forth to the fight while he is shrinking,  
 And weak of hand; but if he seeketh peace  
 And right, and harboureth, as thou perceivest,  
 No mischief in his heart, take tribute from him.  
 Seek not revenge, and save his face. Adorn  
 Thy heart with knowledge; that hath worth; that  
 know  
 And practise. Thou wilt be beloved if bounteous,  
 And famed if wise and just. Keep thy sire's charge C. 1415  
 In mind and leave a like one to thy son.  
 As I have given my son his heritage,  
 And injure none thereby, do ye transmit it;  
 Take not the spirit of my words amiss.  
 Now when five hundred years have passed away,  
 Thy dynasty will end, for thy descendants,  
 And others of thy kin. will turn aside

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

From this my charge, depart from rede and knowledge  
 Not heeding the monitions of the wise,  
 But, faithlessly neglectful of my charge,  
 Be unjust, harsh, and tyrannous, oppress  
 Their subjects, scorn the pious, don the robe  
 Of wickedness, and grow up in the Faith  
 Of Áhriman. Then will be loosed what we  
 Have bound, this Faith that we have fulled be fouled,  
 This rede and charge of mine will come to naught,  
 My country seem all desolate. I pray  
 The Maker of the world, who knoweth both  
 The hidden and the manifest, to guard you  
 From every evil and that all your deeds  
 May win fair fame. God's blessing and our own  
 Shall be upon the man whose warp is wisdom,  
 Whose woof is justice, who in these regards  
 Attempteth not to break my charge or striveth  
 To turn my honey into colocynth.  
 Two score years and two months have passed since I  
 Assumed the crown of kingship. I possess  
 Six cities, all in pleasurable climes,  
 And all of them well-watered. I have named  
 One Khurra-i-Ardshír; <sup>1</sup> its airs are all  
 Musk-perfumed and its streams run milk; the second  
 Is titled Rám Ardshír; <sup>2</sup> thence reached I Párs;  
 The third Urmuzd Ardshír, <sup>3</sup> whose airs would make  
 An old man young—the lustre of the province  
 Of Khúzistán; <sup>4</sup> it hath folk, trade, and water.  
 Another one is Birka-i-Ardshír, <sup>5</sup>  
 Well stocked with gardens, pools, and rosaries,  
 And two are in the district of Baghdád  
 And the Farát, and rich in cattle, springs,  
 And grass—foundations both, as thou mayst say,

<sup>1</sup> The Glory of Ardshír.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 202.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 302, *note*.

<sup>4</sup> Reading with P and T.

<sup>5</sup> The Cistern of Ardshír.

Of Sháh Ardshír.<sup>1</sup> Bear them in mind when thou  
Hear'st aught concerning me.

I have prepared  
My baggage for the charnel-house. Bestow  
My bier and take my seat. In this world I  
Have borne great toils in public and in private.  
Rejoice my soul with justice and be glad,  
And conquering, on the throne."

He spake, and fortune  
Grew dark. Woe for his head and throne and crown !

The fashion of this jocund world is thus : C. 1416  
It will not make its secrets known to us.  
Blest is the man who greatness ne'er hath known,  
And hath no need to vanish from the throne.  
Thou strivest, winning wealth in every way,  
But man and wealth abide not in one stay ;  
Dust in the end is wedded to us all,  
Our cheeks must be enshrouded by a pall.  
Come bear we all a hand good to fulfil,  
And tread not this unstable world for ill.  
Oh well is he that taketh cups of wine  
To toast the Sháhs—those men of Faith divine—  
For, as his cup of wine is slowly drained,  
He droppeth off with ecstasy attained.

§ 11

*Thanksgiving to the Maker and Praise of Mahmúd,  
the great King*

To Him who made it let all praise ascend :  
The Maker of space, time, and earth is He :  
From Him are the beginning and the end,  
From Him are passion and tranquillity :

<sup>1</sup> These may be Bih-Ardshír built to replace Seleucia, destroyed by Avidius Cassius in A.D. 164, and Karakh-Maishán on the lower Tigris. They are given in Tabari's list of Ardshír's foundations. NT, p. 19.

He made the starry heavens, earth, and time  
The great and little of the world are His,  
From worthless stubble to the throne sublime  
All things bear witness to us that He is.

Call none but Him the Author of the whole,  
Whose ken naught open or concealed can shun,  
Who showered blessings on Muhammad's soul,  
And on his comrades also, every one.

They all were holy men and continent ;  
None can compute the words which erst they said :  
Now by us too let countless words be spent  
In thanking Him by whom the world was made.

Praise we the crown too of the king of kings,  
Whose throne doth cause the moon itself to shine,  
World-lord Mahmúd, the source whence largessings  
And bounties spring, and who hath Grace divine.

Brave, bounteous, dowered with Grace, and just is he.  
The age hath grown all joyful 'neath his sway—  
The lord of peace, of crown, and treasury,  
The lord of scimitar, of ax, and fray.

Our gracious world-lord, conscious what is meant  
By merit, thanketh God through whom his hold  
Is on the crown. Wise, fair, and eloquent  
Is he, in years a youth, in wisdom old.

His Grace compelleth rain from Jupiter,  
We sport beneath the shadow of his wings,  
In fight he maketh heaven his echoer,  
He scattereth jewels at his banquetings.

When he is wroth the mountains melt away,  
 The welkin quaketh o'er the dust below ;  
 His sires were Sháhs and monarchs ere his day,  
 And sun and moon toy with him as they go.

May his renown last ever, may he see  
 Till his last day increasing happiness.  
 I head my story with his eulogy,  
 His majesty, his conduct, and address. C. 1417

Throughout the world I witness his renown ;  
 Until the end may good attend him still ;  
 His mien hath given lustre to the crown,  
 And fortune been his breastplate 'gainst all ill.

Throughout the world all men of Faith divine,  
 And all the kings, rejoice in him alone,  
 Whose glorious fortune maketh heaven to shine,  
 For earth but baseth his illustrious throne.

He is a mighty Elephant of bale  
 In fight and at the feast a faithful sky,<sup>1</sup>  
 For there, since his bright projects never fail,  
 Each billow of his ocean runneth high.

Earth's monarchs are his quarry in the chace,  
 Wild beasts and cattle in his peace abide,  
 In battle-days the whizzing of his mace  
 Dissundereth lion's heart and leopard's hide.

May his head flourish, justice fill his heart,  
 And with the world his head and crown ne'er part.

<sup>1</sup> A sky that fulfils its promise of rain.

## XXIII

### SHÁPÚR, SON OF ARDSHÍR

HE REIGNED THIRTY YEARS AND TWO  
MONTHS

#### ARGUMENT

Shápúr ascends the throne and addresses the chiefs. He wars with success against Rûm, appoints Urmuzd his successor, and dies.

#### NOTE

This reign affords a good illustration of the inaccurate way in which events are recorded even in the most historical of the four dynasties of the Sháh-náma. Shápúr, son of Ardashír (Sapor I., A.D. 241-272), is confused with Shápúr, son of Urmuzd (Sapor II., A.D. 309-379). Important historical events are transferred from the former's reign to the latter's where, to save repetition, they will be dealt with. Again, Shápúr son of Ardashír's two wars with Rome, which historically are parted by a considerable interval of time, are rolled into one. The first war ended in A.D. 244, and the second did not begin till some fourteen or more years later. The latter is the one chiefly commemorated in the Sháh-náma. In the course of it the Roman Emperor Valerian, the Bazánúsh of Firdausí, was defeated and taken prisoner in Mesopotamia owing to the treachery of Macrianus, his Prætorian prefect, and died in captivity. Shápúr then made a raid into Cilicia and Cappadocia—names which appear as Kaidáfa and Pálawína in the poem.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently he withdrew his forces, and during his retreat was handled very roughly by Odenathus, prince of Palmyra, who later on made himself master of Mesopotamia and ruled from the Tigris to the Mediterranean till his assassination in A.D. 267. A trace of Shápúr's mishap seems to survive, but

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<sup>1</sup> NT, p. 32, and *note*.

the tale is told in connexion with Shápúr, son of Urmuzd. The triumph over Valerian was commemorated in many memorials by his conqueror.<sup>1</sup> The name of the city built for the Roman captives was Gund-i-Shápúr, probably the Shápúr Gird of Firdausí as both cities are described as being in Susiana. It was between Susa and Shúshtar, and its situation is indicated by the ruins of Sháhábád.<sup>2</sup> The great dam in connexion with the river Kárún is still in existence. It is very likely that Shápúr's Roman prisoners helped to make it. It is known as the "Band-i-Kaisar."<sup>3</sup>

## § 1

*How Shápúr sat upon the Throne and delivered a Charge  
to the Chieftains*

To tell the kingship of Shápúr be thine,  
And hold discourse on festival and wine.

Whenas Shápúr sat on the throne of justice,  
And donned the heart-illumining crown, the sages,  
Wise magnates, and archmagés, met before him.  
He thus harangued the noble gathering—  
The great and understanding counsellors:—

"I am the lawful son of Sháh Ardashír,  
The utterer and layer up of knowledge.  
Heed, all of you! my bidding and be loyal,  
Scan what I say and blame it if 'tis crude.  
In mine experience as to good and ill  
Two dispensations are conspicuous.

One is the Sháh, the warden of the world,  
And guardian of the wealth of high and low.  
If he is just and fortunate 'tis clear  
That wisdom watcheth over, helpeth him,  
And o'er the dark clouds will exalt his head.

His whole quest is for justice, and for knowledge  
That maketh music in his soul. The other  
Is whosoever manfully essayeth  
To compass wisdom and is wise in knowing

C. 1418

<sup>1</sup> See the illustrations in RSM, pp. 82, 91.

<sup>2</sup> NT, 41, *note*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Ency. Brit.*, 11th ed., s.v. "Shushter."

That it is God to whom his thanks are due.  
 Blest is the sage that knoweth God ; the wise  
 Is worthy of the kingship ; gold is worthless  
 In wisdom's stead. The man that is content  
 Is well to do ; the avaricious heart  
 Is but a house of smoke. The more the greed  
 The more the care, so strive to shun its fruits.  
 Incline to peace and things of good report,  
 And flee the ill-disposed, for little wits  
 Will grasp at others' goods. I love you more  
 Than there are stars to glitter in the sky ;  
 The customs of the exalted Sháh Ardshír  
 Assuredly will I confirm to you,  
 And take a thirtieth only from the thanes  
 To pay my soldiers somewhat. I have weal,  
 An ample treasure, courage, manliness,  
 And constancy. We covet no man's goods,  
 For they turn friends to foes. The way is open  
 For you to us. We love the suppliant.  
 We will send agents everywhere, search shrewdly  
 The world's affairs, and ne'er ask other blessings  
 Than those which men invoke from God on me."

Rose high and low, prepared their tongues to make  
 A fair reply, called praises down on him,  
 And scattered emeralds on his crown. The customs  
 Of Sháh Ardshír revived withal, and then  
 Both young and old joyed in that regimen.

## § 2

*How Shápúr fought with the Rómáns, how Bazánúsh, their  
 General, was taken Prisoner, and how Cæsar made  
 Peace with Shápúr*

Then tidings spread : "The throne of king of kings  
 Is occupied no more, wise Sháh Ardshír  
 Hath died and left Shápúr the throne and crown."



The battle-cry went up in all the coasts,  
 And hubbub from Kaidáfa<sup>1</sup> unto Rúm.  
 When news reached Sháh Shápúr he made him ready  
 Troops, flags, and drums, and led toward Pálawína  
 A flying column with no baggage-train.  
 An army that bedimmed the sun with dust  
 Marched from Kaidáfa, and a host withal  
 From Pálawína 'neath a paladin  
 Hight Bazánúsh, a noble cavalier  
 Of ardent soul, a chief and lasso-thrower  
 Prized by the Cæsars. When from those two hosts  
 Rose tymbal-din came from the Rúman centre  
 An eager warrior, from the Íránian  
 A famous chieftain hight Garshásp the Lion;  
 What man or lusty elephant could match  
 That valiant cavalier in battle-tide?

C. 1419

These two engaged and strewed the stars with dust,  
 Used all their skill, but neither could prevail.  
 Then clashed the hosts together mountain-like;  
 Rose their drum-roll and shoutings. Bold Shápúr  
 Bestirred him at the centre. At the din  
 Of trump and Indian bell thou wouldst have said  
 That heaven shook; the earth rocked, and the air  
 Was full of dust, the war-spears gleamed like fire,  
 And all the men of wisdom called on God.  
 Amid the central host brave Bazánúsh,  
 All sorrowful of heart, was taken captive,  
 While of his Rúmans were ten thousand slain  
 At Pálawína in the ranks of war,  
 And twice eight hundred taken prisoners;  
 Those warriors' hearts were full of sore distress.  
 Then Cæsar sent a well-instructed envoy  
 To ask Shápúr, the son of Sháh Ardashír:—  
 "How much blood wilt thou pour out for dínárs?  
 What wilt thou say to our just Judge and Guide

<sup>1</sup> See p. 294.

When questioned at the Day of Reckoning?  
 How make excuse to Him who giveth all?  
 Add not to our distress for I will pay  
 The wonted tribute, will submit, dispatch  
 Abundant hostages of mine own kin,  
 And, if thou wilt withdraw from Pálawína,  
 Will send thee in addition what thou wilt."

Shápúr remained till Cæsar sent to him  
 The tribute in ten ox-hides of dínárs  
 Of Cæsar's coinage with much wealth besides—  
 A thousand male and female Rúman slaves,  
 And countless splendid pieces of brocade.

Shápúr abode a week in Pálawína,  
 Then leaving Rúm he journeyed to Ahwáz,<sup>1</sup>  
 And there he built a city named Shápúr Gird:  
 He finished it upon the day of Ard.

C. 1420

It took a year besides much toil and treasure.  
 He built a city for the prisoners  
 From Rúm and filled it with inhabitants;  
 The district is the gate of Khúzistán,<sup>2</sup>  
 And in the great high-way whereby all pass.

He built himself a city too in Pars,  
 Great, fair, and wealthy, and the ancient fortress<sup>3</sup>  
 Of Nishápúr, they say, without forced labour.  
 He carried Bazánúsh about with him,  
 And heeded him. Now there was at Shúshtar  
 A stream so broad that fish could cross it not.  
 He said to Bazánúsh: "If thou hast skill  
 Make over this a bridge as 'twere a rope,  
 For we return to dust but it will bide  
 Firm through the science of its architect.  
 'Twill be a thousand cubits long; request  
 Whate'er thou needest from my treasury.  
 Employ thou to some purpose in this land

<sup>1</sup> Susiana.<sup>2</sup> *Id.*<sup>3</sup> Mohl keeps Kuhandizh (old fort) as a proper name.

The skill of Rúman engineers and, when  
The bridge is finished, come and be my guest  
For life in mirth and safety, and afar  
From evil and the hand of Áhriman."

Brave Bazánúsh began the work and built  
The bridge in three years' space, then left Shúshtar  
And set his face to hurry to his home.  
Shápúr was just, in counsel well approved,  
His star exalted and his throne unmoved.<sup>1</sup>

### § 3

*How Shápúr seated Urmuzd upon the Throne and died*

When thirty years and two months had gone by  
The Grace and glory of the Sháh were spent.  
He called Urmuzd. "The freshness of my face,"  
He said, "is sere; be vigilant, be world-lord,  
And ever rule with justice, but be ware  
Of putting trust in sovereignty; peruse  
Both day and night the volume of Jamshíd;  
Do only what is just and good; be thou  
The lowly's shelter and the mighty's Grace;  
Toy little with dínars, be bounteous, just,  
And glorious; exclaim not at slight ills  
If thou wouldst have good fortune as thy friend,  
And keep in mind my counsels, every whit,  
As I myself possess them from Ardashír."

C. 1421

He spake, the colour paled upon his cheek,  
The heart of that wise man grew full of anguish.

What can this Wayside Hostel do for thee?  
Wouldst hug renown? Wouldst fill thy treasury?  
A narrow coffin will be all thy spoil,  
Some worthless one will batten on thy toil,

<sup>1</sup> In C, the reign ends here, but we have followed the arrangement of P, which seems preferable.

Thou wilt be clean forgotten by thy sons,  
Thy nearest kinsfolk and companions,  
The heritage wherein thou'lt have thy share  
Is that of malediction, for where'er  
Bezoar is the poison too is there.  
Turn then to God and multiply His praise,  
Who feedeth thee and guideth all thy ways.

## XXIV

### URMUZD, SON OF SHÁPÚR

HE REIGNED ONE YEAR AND TWO MONTHS

#### ARGUMENT

Urmuzd, whose reign proved to be a very brief one, succeeds his father and harangues the nobles. Feeling the approach of death he summons his son Bahráṁ, appoints him successor, gives him good counsel, and dies.

#### NOTE

The romantic story of Urmuzd's (Hormisdas I., A.D. 272-273), birth,<sup>1</sup> is all that survives in connexion with him, apart from Firdausi's common form in dealing with the short reigns,<sup>2</sup> in the *Sháhnáma*. In the *Kárnámak* he is represented as a great prince, being confused probably with his father. It is likely that he made a reputation for courage and energy in the wars against Rome and as governor in Khurásán. At all events, according to tradition, he earned for himself the title of "the hero." It is told of him that, being falsely accused of disloyalty, he cut off one of his hands and sent it, wrapped in silk, to his father to prove his innocence as no mutilated person could succeed to the throne. His father, deeply distressed, arranged that mutilation should be no bar in that instance.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 268 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 249.

<sup>3</sup> NK, 68, and *note*; NT, 43, 45, and *notes*; RM, Pt. I., vol. ii. p. 335.

## § I

*How Urmuzd addressed the Assembly*

Now will I make the diadem and throne  
 Of Sháh Urmuzd as brilliant as the moon  
 Upon the day whose name and his are one.<sup>1</sup>  
 His reign had but one fault—it ended soon.  
 Whenas great Sháh Urmuzd had ta'en his seat  
 The sheep and wolf alike came to his cistern.  
 He thus addressed the noble men of lore,  
 And chieftains veteran and experienced :—  
 “ I shall pursue the just and right, for he  
 That keepeth in his mind his sire's advice  
 Is blest. Since God, the Giver of all good,  
 Hath given good to me, and therewithal  
 The crown that is upon the head of kings.  
 I would by kindness win you as my friends,  
 And share your secrets. Know that self-willed men  
 Are hated by the mighty ; led away  
 By their impatience they have ne'er enough,  
 For envy is the scimitar of fools,  
 And fortune ever mocketh them. Again,  
 Short will the life and provand be of one  
 Ashamed to work. Avoid the common folk  
 If so thou canst, their hearts are doors of greed.  
 Pass not in life his portal whom thou findest  
 Devoid of knowledge : but the men of wisdom,  
 With prudence and good rede, confirm the throne.  
 May thy heart live by prudence and good sense ;  
 Do thou thine utmost to avoid all ill.  
 Knowledge and wisdom are like earth and water,  
 And should combine. What marvel if the heart

<sup>1</sup> Urmuzd was the name of the first day of each solar month—a day considered particularly propitious for beginning any undertaking—*e.g.* a journey.

Of any king that putteth from him love  
 Shall darken? May my subjects all rejoice  
 And worship God, may He approve of them,  
 And wisdom aid them inly and without.  
 The sage, conversing with the devotee  
 About the Sháh, should weigh his utterance,  
 Because good speech is never out of date;  
 Speak but good words thyself and list to none  
 That speaketh ill: the great king's heart will note  
 Thy secret, and his ear will hear thy voice,  
 For 'Walls have ears,' as one that could both speak,  
 And listen. said."

C. 1422

The whole assembly blessed  
 That Sháh so shrewd of heart and pure of Faith,  
 And broke up glad in that o'ershadowing Cypress.

That wise Sháh kept the precepts of Shápúr.  
 The son of Sháh Ardshír, and all the world  
 Rejoiced in him. How good are kings when just  
 And generous! He ruled with modesty  
 And justice till a while had passed, and then  
 The place of musk with camphor was o'erspread,  
 And in the garth the Cercis-bloom lay dead.

## § 2

*How Urmuzd gave up the Throne to Bahrám, charged  
 him, and died*

Urmuzd, when ware that death could not be shunned,  
 Wept many a tear of blood. He had a son,  
 Imperious, whom the wise Sháh called Bahrám.  
 He had the carpet laid within his hall,  
 Bade, and Bahrám appeared, to whom he said:—  
 "Mine own true son exalt in manliness  
 And knowledge! feebleness hath come upon me,  
 And made my face self-coloured with my hair.

C. 1423

Bent is the straight-stemmed Cypress, and the rose,  
 Erst crimson, hath the colour of the quince.  
 Be world-lord when thy time shall come, be wise,  
 And do no hurt; turn not from those that cry  
 For justice; pardon not oppressors' faults;  
 Refrain thy tongue from falsehood if thou wouldst  
 Illume thy throne; let wisdom be thy soul  
 And modesty thy minister; in speech  
 Be eloquent, and let thy voice be soft:  
 Be thine ally the Lord of victory,  
 And may thy quarry be thy subjects' hearts.  
 Abate strife and make passion alien;  
 God grant it rule thee not. Refuse thyself  
 To scandal-mongers, foolish folk, and knaves.  
 Thou wilt but suffer from the ignorant,  
 So heed them not. Know that none honoureth  
 The shameless and the babbler. Let thy lord  
 Be wisdom, wrath thy slave, and be not hasty  
 Against the temperate. Be ware lest greed  
 Encompass thee because it causeth wrath  
 And fear and need, but practise all forbearance,  
 And uprightness, and banish from thy heart  
 Both fraud and falsehood. Shun an evil name,  
 For that will mar thy fortune. No wise quit  
 The way of wisdom. Haste will bring repentance,  
 But tarriance will show the proper course.  
 Quit not the path of virtue. Patient men  
 Will keep their temper and will shut their eyes  
 To what is not to be, yet, since the bold  
 Take patience in excess for feebleness,  
 The master of the throne will choose the mean  
 Of wisdom. Neither haste nor slackness serve;  
 Let wisdom guide thy soul. See to it, thou!  
 That no detractors win thine approbation,  
 And seek no friendship with thine enemy  
 Although he hail thee king; that tree is green



Its fruit is colocynth, and if thou graspest  
His feet thou hast his head. Exalt or base,  
Whiche'er thou art, be not illuded. Fortune  
Is ill to the malignant; be not so.  
The assemblies of the noble scorn a chief  
That breaketh covenant. Take hold on wisdom,  
For that will grace thy soul, crown, host, and wealth.  
Guard word and covenant, and read the motions  
Of sun and moon. Affect not wealth and pleasure.  
Because this Wayside Inn will cease for thee;  
Consult the wise alone and keep the customs  
Of former Sháhs; fray foemen by thy hosts,  
And look with heed behind thee and before.  
He that will flatter worthless men to gain  
His ends may by his words destroy thyself:  
Let such not age with thee, yet hold one less  
Than man that hath no use for praise, for God  
Approveth praise and straiteneth slanderers' hearts.  
He that can wink at others' faults, and swallow  
His wrath with ease, will grow each day in wealth, C. 1424  
While hasty men will have full hearts. No sage  
Is he that seeketh combat with the sea.  
Slight not my sayings, make thy heart a bow,  
Thy tongue an arrow, let thy chest be broadened,  
And thine arm straight, then shoot at what thou wilt.  
Conform thy tongue and heart withal to wisdom,  
Then please thyself in talk. The brainless man  
Hath all his counsel and his words inept.  
When with thy counsellors consult in private.  
If thou hast counsel and experience  
Thou wilt be day by day more prosperous,  
Thy spirit will be shrewder than thy foe's,  
Thy heart and brain and counsel more prevailing.  
One that is led by passion will not prosper.  
By gratifying friends thou wilt increase  
Their pleasure and their welfare. Frown on foes,

And make the faces of ill-wishers pale.  
Give alms; so is thy treasure best employed.  
Shun envy; from it spring hot tears of blood,  
And upright men condemn it in a king.  
For fourteen months I reigned unwittingly,  
Expecting to retain the crown and throne  
For years, but now my time hath come, and thou  
Must gird thyself to rule."

A noble scribe

Wrote out this testament, and the wazír  
Laid it before the Sháh, who heaved a sigh,  
While his flushed face became like withered leaves.  
Now, when those cheeks grew golden, pain and grief  
Became the portion of Bahrám who mourned  
For forty days and left the lofty throne  
Unoccupied, for he was sorrowful.  
Thus will it be while heaven shall turn above,  
At whiles all anguish and at whiles all love.

'Tis the Urmuzd of Dai, and night; be thine  
To rest from speech and put thy hand to wine.

## XXV

### BAHRÁM SON OF URMUZD

HE REIGNED THREE YEARS, THREE MONTHS,  
AND THREE DAYS

#### NOTE

To the reign of Bahrám (Varahran I., A.D. 273-276) properly belongs the end of the career of the great heresiarch, Mání, who, having been banished by Shápúr, son of Ardshír, and recalled by his son Urmuzd, was executed by order of Bahrám. Mání, however, is relegated in the Sháhnáma to the reign of Shápúr, son of Urmuzd (Sapor II.).<sup>1</sup>

Historically Bahrám appears to have been the son of Shápúr, son of Ardshír (Sapor I.), not of Urmuzd, son of Shápúr.<sup>2</sup>

#### § I

*How Bahrám succeeded to the Throne, charged the Nobles,  
and died*

The diadem of Sháh Bahrám essay—

A Sháh whose kingship swiftly passed away.<sup>3</sup>

Whenas Bahrám sat on the throne of gold,

C. 1425

In grievous trouble at his sire's decease,

The Íránian chiefs all came to him in tears,

And girt to serve him. They invoked God's blessing

Upon him, saying: "Be while place endureth,

Because the royal throne becometh thee;

<sup>1</sup> See p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> NT, p. 49. *note*.

<sup>3</sup> The previous reign ends here in C.

Thou hast the kingship from thine ancestors.  
 Be thy foes' faces pale, and may thy soul  
 Cease to deplore the dead."

He answered: "Chiefs.

Brave cavaliers, and nobles! let nothane,  
 Or other liege, put hand to ill. Behold  
 How this unresting Dome respecteth neither  
 The fostered nor the fosterer. Bind fast  
 The hands of passion and reject its bidding.  
 Whoever shall abstain from evil-doing,  
 And smircheth not himself by his ill deeds,  
 Will live glad days and pass in peace. The Sháh  
 Should guard the wealth of others, tender dearly  
 Men of good conduct, and protect the Faith,  
 Because it is the crown upon his head.  
 He that is wise in wrath, and acteth not  
 Injuringly, is blest. In times of stress  
 His heart is great and glad. Oh! may the world  
 Lack not the sage, and sage indeed is he  
 That trampleth not<sup>1</sup> upon a vanquished foe.  
 Vindictiveness proceedeth ill from those  
 That seek renown. Abstain and use it not.  
 Know that thanes, troops, and kings unoccupied;<sup>2</sup>  
 Hold no set course; the idle slumbereth,  
 And waketh to remorse; well said, ill done.  
 Gain thee no praise or jocund Paradise.  
 Seek fame, do well, and break no good men's hearts.  
 I am possessed of treasure and dínars  
 In plenty, I have majesty and kingship,  
 And might of hand. Enjoy your own and know  
 That one who hath not is of those that have  
 Because my purse is open: none must want."

C. 1420

Not many days passed by ere that crowned head  
 Came to the shears. The Sháh possessed a son—  
 His heart's delight—Bahráh, son of Bahráh,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

<sup>2</sup> Reading with P and T.

For whom he sent, set him beneath the throne,  
And said: "Green offshoot from my stem! not long  
Have I enjoyed the crown, but be thy time  
All glorious. Rejoice, increase, and pass  
Thy days and nights in mirth. So walk that thou.  
When questioned at the Great Account, hast not  
To turn in shame from Him who gave thee all.  
By justice and by bounty cause the world  
To flourish and thy subjects' hearts to joy,  
For whether one be king or archimage  
The world abideth not with him for ever."

Three years, three months, three days passed o'er his  
head,  
And then the world-illuming throne was void,  
And as Bahrám gave to Bahrám the world  
The son gave to the sire the charnel's peace.

Know, 'tis no outrage of the turning sky:  
It holdeth but as wind that passeth by  
All that hath breath, and till it cease to roll  
Thus will it be: why then afflict thy soul?  
Why seek or speak concerning what should be?  
Discourse on things like these is not for thee.  
E'en though in greed thy soul be grown not sere  
Thy resting place is but a narrow bier.  
Since death then cometh of such wolfish breed  
A mighty bowl of wine will fill my need,  
And one of silvern form and cypress-tall,  
A charmer sweet of speech and kind withal,  
With jasmine scent, bright cheeks, a moon in mien,  
Musk-scented, and with looks of sun-like shcen.

XXVI

BAHRÁM, SON OF BAHRÁM

HE REIGNED NINETEEN YEARS

NOTE

The reign of this Bahrám (Varahran II., A.D. 276-293), is in the Sháh-náma as bare of events as that of his predecessor, and Tabarí has next to nothing to say of him. Mas'údí, however, tells us that he began badly till once, when returning from the chase, the Sháh in company with the high priest passed through a hamlet, recently abandoned, amid whose ruins naught was heard but the hooting of the owls. The Sháh asked the high priest if he knew any one that understood their language. The high priest answered that he himself had that gift, and that what the bird said was true. The Sháh inquired what it was, and the high priest replied :—"This owl is a male and wishes to wed. He asked the female owl to accept him as her mate so that their offspring might bless God and perpetuate their name. The female said that she should like it of all things, but that she would accept him only on certain conditions. To begin with he must present her with twenty villages chosen from the chief demesnes that had become vacant under the reigning sovereign." "What was the male's reply?" asked the Sháh. "Your majesty!" answered the high priest, "the owl made this response :—'If the reign of this monarch prove a long one I shall be able to give you a good thousand villages, but what do you propose?' 'From our union' rejoined the female, 'will spring a numerous succession of children, and we shall be able to give each of them a share of these ruins.' 'Nothing can be simpler and easier than what you wish' replied the male, 'and I agree in advance, for I am overstocked with this kind of wealth. Tell me what you want more.'" The Sháh was struck by the high priest's apologue, and ruled thereafter for his people's good.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> MM, ii. 169 *seq.*

## § 1

*How BahráM, Son of BahráM, ascended the Throne, charged  
the Nobles, and died*

While mourning Sháh BahráM for forty days  
BahráM himself did not assume the crown.  
The warriors, the men exceeding wise,  
All grief, all wailing, and all lamentation,  
Came and sat with him in his woe and mourning,  
Wan-cheeked with lips of lapis-lazuli,  
Until a prudent archmage came and said :—  
“ Will not the Sháh be seated on the throne ? ”

For one whole se’nnight urgently he strove,  
And ceased not till the throne was occupied.<sup>1</sup>

Now when BahráM assumed his seat, rejoicing, C. 1427  
And crowned himself as kings are wont, he first  
Praised God—the Light of circling time, the Increaser  
Of knowledge and of uprightness, the Marrer  
Of falsehood and of fraud, the Lord of Saturn  
And of revolving heaven, who asketh naught  
But love and justice from His slaves—and then  
Said thus : “ Tried sages and pure archimages !  
Hold knowledge great and be not bold with kings.  
The man endowed with increase, eloquence,  
And leadership by God will strive, if wise,  
To compass excellence and cultivate  
Humanity, whose attribute is patience,  
Because the rash are held contemptible.  
Security produceth happiness,  
For then distress and toil have turned to wind,  
And gathering wealth is like wind too to one  
Of noble heart for he is rich already.  
Yet get some havings if thou hast them not,

<sup>1</sup> The previous reign ends here in C. We follow the arrangement in P.

For folk despise the indigent. The man  
Possessed of nothing hath no influence,  
And none respect him. When thou art content  
Thou feel'st at ease, but practise greed and thou  
Wilt live in fear, so toil not thus to vex  
Thy body and thy soul for greed of treasure.  
Choose thou the mean if thou wouldst have folk's praise  
In matters temporal. If thou contentest  
The world with justice thou wilt be made glad  
Thyself thereby and rich. Security  
And uprightness, and no default in justice,  
Are needful. When joy faileth spirit faileth,  
And wisdom 'twixt the twain is impotent,  
While if greed clutch thy heart thy soul remaineth  
Within the gullet of the Crocodile."

When he had reigned for twenty years save one  
Life mourned him, that crowned Sháh espoused the  
dust;

A charnel hid him from the jocund world.

C. 1428

Such is the fashion of the turning sky,  
Though thou art feeble it hath mastery,  
And such the fashion of this world as well;  
It hath its secrets but it ne'er will tell!



## XXVII

### BAHRÁM BAHRÁMIYÁN

#### HE REIGNED FOUR MONTHS

#### NOTE

According to Tabarí this Sháh (Varahran III., A.D. 293) reigned four years,<sup>1</sup> but Mas'údí, like Firdausí, says four months.<sup>2</sup> Professor Noldeke suggests that he reigned for four months only in the capital, but ruled longer in other parts of the kingdom, probably in conflict with Narsí,<sup>3</sup> his uncle, historically, as Bahrám Bahrámiyán appears to have been the son of Urmuzd, son of Shápúr.<sup>4</sup> The true owner of the title of "Kirmánsháh" is Bahrám, son of Shápúr (Varahran IV., A.D. 388-399).

#### § I

*How Bahrám Bahrámiyán succeeded to the Throne and died  
four Months after*

Bahrám Bahrámiyán sat on the throne,  
And girt himself for justice and for bounty.  
They sprinkled emeralds upon his crown,  
They called him Kirmánsháh, and thus he said :—  
" May God, the just and only God, bestow  
Upon us wisdom for our portion, justice,  
And counsel. This our Wayside Hostelry  
Abideth not with any. Goodness help us,  
Lean we and cleave thereto, and make our heart  
Our witness by our justice and our bounty,

NT. p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> MM, ii. 174.

<sup>3</sup> NT, p. 416.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* 436 a.

For since the good and evil that we do  
Are our memorials sow thou naught but good."

When he had reigned four months the throne and  
crown

Bewailed him bitterly. When certified  
That death was near—that crocodile which hunteth  
Rhinoceros and elephant—he gave  
His son the world, and said: "Be thy reign glorious!  
Array thyself, drink wine, walk delicately,  
Be bountiful; make not thy day with throne  
And crown unfortunate." <sup>1</sup>

Thus moments speed,  
Their breaths uncounted by the man of greed!  
O happy fortune! bring red wine to me,  
For now the poet's years are sixty-three.

<sup>1</sup> In the glossary to C "inverted." The word properly has the meaning of "bright," but what is bright is easily reflected, what is reflected is inverted, and inversion well may imply misfortune.

# XXVIII

## NARSÍ, SON OF BAHRÁM

### HE REIGNED NINE YEARS

#### NOTE

Narsí (Narses, A.D. 293-302) does not appear to have been the son of Bahráṁ Bahrámiyán but of Shápúr, son of Ardshír Pápakán.<sup>1</sup> Historically his reign was an important one as we learn from sources other than Persian and Arabic. Firdausí, Tabarí, and Mas'údí have little or nothing to record of him, but Mirkhúnd states that he abdicated in favour of his son Urmuzd, and, further, that his prowess in the chase won him the title of 'The mighty Hunter.'<sup>2</sup>

#### § I

*How Narsí succeeded to the Throne, counselled his  
Son, and died*

Bahrám, when fortune's day no longer shone,

Surrendered to Narsí the crown and throne.

This is the way; there is no end thereto.

The wanton sky hath ever something new!

Whenas Narsí sat on the ivory seat,

C. 1429

And donned the crown that gladdeneth the heart,

The nobles all approached with offerings,

And mourning in their sorrow for his sire.

The chief blessed them, and said: "My loving lieges,

Adherents both of justice and the Faith!

<sup>1</sup> NT, p. 50, *note*.

<sup>2</sup> RM, Pt. I., vol. ii. p. 340.

Know that the Maker so hath ordered all<sup>1</sup>  
 That me of all the world He hath endowed  
 With wisdom and with generosity,  
 Good counsel, modesty, and gentle speech,  
 And if my star shall prove beneficent  
 I will secure prosperity for you.<sup>1</sup>  
 When any wise man hath become thy friend  
 Know that he is one skin with thee.<sup>2</sup> Expect  
 Great deeds from great men, wisdom from the sage.  
 True courage hath reflection for its base,  
 And valiant men are worthy of all praise;  
 But he that fleeth from the work in hand  
 Will ne'er find fame and honour on the field.  
 The indolent are cowardly as well,  
 For indolence and cowardice agree."

This man of rede and counsel lived nine years,  
 And by his sayings profited the world;  
 But when his day approached, when fortune loured,  
 And when his casque of steel became like wax,  
 Urmuzd, bright as a tulip midst the grass,  
 Ran to the pillow of the noble Sháh,  
 Whose son he was and splendent as the moon  
 At night. The Sháh said: "Gently nurtured youth!  
 Refrain thy hand with all thy strength from ill.  
 Soul of Narsí art thou, Bahrá'm's own fortune,  
 Crown-worthy and the glory of the throne.  
 Oh! may the crown ne'er weep, the people's heart  
 Consume, for thee who hast such stature, Grace,  
 Limbs, and unmatched achievement in all knowledge.  
 Rule thou the world by royal precedents  
 As thou hast learned them from thy pious sire.  
 At length thine own day too will pass away,  
 And restless heaven tread thee down; so act then  
 That when thy God shall question thee thine answer

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.*Cf.* Vol. i. p. 110.

May make thy bliss secure."

This said, he drew  
 The mantle o'er his head and heaved a sigh.  
 That day thou wouldst have said that he was not,  
 And had no throne or seat or diadem.

Thy lot is naught but toil and misery:  
'Tis so—a mystery to every eye!

## XXIX

### URMUZD, SON OF NARSÍ

HE REIGNED NINE YEARS

#### NOTE

The reign of this Sháh (Hormisdas II., A.D. 302-309) seems to be regarded as uneventful by all authorities. He left, apparently, three sons, Ázarnarsí, Urmuzd, and one unnamed, in addition to one or more posthumes. After the Sháh's death Ázarnarsí succeeded, but within a year was deposed for cruelty, Urmuzd was imprisoned but escaped long afterwards to the Romans,<sup>1</sup> the unnamed one was blinded, and a posthumous child became Sháh.<sup>2</sup> He proved to be one of the most famous of the dynasty.

#### § I

*How Urmuzd, Son of Narsí, ascended the Throne and how  
his Life ended*

C. 1430    When great Urmuzd came to the throne wolves' claws  
Were hindered of their quarry, he maintained  
The world in peace, the work of Áhriman  
Was in abeyance. First of all he praised  
Almighty God, all-knowing, all-providing:—  
“ He fashioned night and day and turning heaven,  
Sol, Mars. and Saturn. Victory and Grace,  
The just heart and the imperial diadem,  
Proceed from Him. May justice ever fill  
Our heart. and may our subjects' hearts rejoice.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 325.

<sup>2</sup> NT, p. 51, note.

The hearts of men ignoble win not praise ;  
 If so thou canst consort not thou with such,  
 And take not counsel with the ill-disposed,  
 But, if thou seekest it, incline to good.  
 The pious will not call him bountiful  
 Whose bounty is designed to gain applause,  
 While men will hold the thankless flatterer  
 As naught. The hard man trembleth being friendless.  
 The wise man taketh not the slack as guide,  
 And if thou ask the indolent to help thee  
 Thou art no judge of men and lack'st ambition.  
 Beware of thinking highly of thyself,  
 And be not fierce because thou hast a throne.  
 When one ill-natured groweth poor and vile  
 He layeth all to fortune and will spend  
 His years in indolence,<sup>1</sup> bewailing fortune.  
 Is not possessed of rede and understanding,  
 And is no ornament to any throne.  
 The simple deprivation of all wealth  
 Will ruin him in heart and soul and brain ;  
 He will take pride in want and evil nature,  
 And hold his head up high in his unwisdom,  
 His lack of goods, of knowledge, rede, achievement,  
 Of Faith and of all thankfulness to God.  
 May both your nights and days be prosperous,  
 The marrow of your foemen's lives plucked out."

The chiefs applauded and saluted him  
 As earth's great king. When heaven had turned nine  
     years

Above his head his face that had resembled  
 Pomegranate-bloom became like yellow roses,  
 The head that wore the crown was sick to death ;  
 He died without a son beside his couch.  
 That famed man, who discoursed so pleasantly,  
 Left in his youth this ancient hostelry ;

C. 1431

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Such while the heavens endure will be the event,  
For they are strong and we are impotent.

The people mourned for him for forty days,  
Regardless of the throne, which for a while  
Remained unoccupied: the nobles' heads  
Were full of care. Meanwhile an archimage  
Surveyed the women's bower of Sháh Urmuzd;  
One tulip-cheeked and radiant as the moon,  
With lashes like a dagger of Kábul,  
And locks like mazy Babylonian script,  
All intertwined and knotted on her head,  
Was there, and that fair lady was with child;  
The world rejoiced in her. The archimage  
Brought her and set her on the lofty throne  
Of kings with joy, o'er her they hung the crown,  
And on that golden circlet drachms showered down.



## XXX

# SHÁPÚR, SON OF URMUZD, SURNAMED ZÚ'L AKTÁF

HE REIGNED SEVENTY YEARS

### ARGUMENT

Shápúr is born Sháh. In his youth he builds a bridge at Taisafún and punishes the Arabs for their raids during his minority. Later on he goes to Rûm in disguise, is imprisoned, but escapes, defeats the Rûmans, takes Cæsar prisoner, and dictates terms of peace, which include the cession of Nasíbín (Nisibis). The poet then tells of the heresiarch Máni, his doctrine and death. Shápúr appoints his brother Ardshír regent, and dies soon after.

### NOTE

The duration of the reign of Shápúr (Sapor II., A.D. 309-379), as given by Firdausí, is correct. He was Sháh all his life, contemporary with ten Roman Emperors, and one of the greatest of Sásánian rulers.

As has been stated already, some of the events attributed in the Sháhnáma to the reign of this Sháh really belong to that of his predecessor, the first of his name.<sup>1</sup>

§ 1. The story of the building of the bridge over the Tigris at Taisafún (Ctesiphon) is told also by Tabarí, who says that the additional bridge was constructed by sunset on the same day as that on which the command for its erection was given!<sup>2</sup>

Shápúr's chief places of residence were in Susiana and Mesopotamia, not in Párs as Firdausí states.

§§ 2, 3. Two Shápúrs (Sapor I. and Sapor II.) and much history are confused in this account, in which the taking of Hatra in the early days of the Sásánian dynasty and probably by Shápúr, son

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 294 and below.  
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<sup>2</sup> NT, p. 54.

of Ardshír, is bound up artificially by a romantic incident with the expedition made by Shápúr, son of Urmuzd, into Arabia to avenge the Arab incursions into Persian territory that had taken place during his minority. Hatra or Al Hadr was the capital of a small principality which had become independent during the later days of Parthian rule. It grew up in the Mesopotamian desert, some forty miles west of the Tigris, in an oasis formed by the river Tharthar. Its magnificent ruins stand some forty miles south of Mosul and some two hundred north of Baghdad which is itself some twenty miles higher up the Tigris than the sites of the twin cities of Ctesiphon and Seleucia. The ruins form a complete circle surrounding a central square. The circle has a diameter of a little over a mile and is made up as follows. Outside of all is a broad rampart; within this is a deep moat, now dry, and within this again an immense stone wall with towers at intervals. Within the wall are the ruins of what was once the city. The dwellings of the inhabitants now are represented for the most part by mounds of earth, but in the centre of the area surrounded by the city wall is a square walled enclosure with bastions or towers similar to those of the city wall itself. The four sides of this enclosure front to the four cardinal points, and each side measures 340 yards in length. This enclosure may be regarded as the citadel, and within it were the palace and the temple of both of which the ground-story, consisting of vaulted halls and other buildings, is still upstanding. The whole of the remains, walls, bastions, and all, are of coarse limestone beautifully fitted, every stone also being marked with a letter or number and often carved to represent human faces, foliage, birds, griffins, and other monsters.<sup>1</sup> The place, as will have been seen from the above description, was immensely strong, its inhabitants were warlike, it was only a little over two hundred miles from Ctesiphon and Seleucia—attractions that, as experience was to show, were not beyond the reach of raids from the more distant Palmyra<sup>2</sup>—and Ardshír Papakán not unnaturally desired its reduction. This he, or his son Shápúr, actually achieved. The stronghold had withstood successfully sieges by the Emperors Trajan and Severus. It fell at last through treachery. According to the story the Arabs had made a successful foray in the neighbourhood of Ctesiphon and Seleucia during the absence of Shápúr. The leader of this raid was a certain Daizan or, as Firdausí calls him, Táír, and there may be here some reminiscence of the capture by Odenathus of some of Shápúr's harem after the war with

<sup>1</sup> See JRGS, Vols. ix, 467, xi, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 325.

Valerian.<sup>1</sup> At all events the raider was some Arab chief, but in our story was the king of Hatra. Shápúr, informed of what had happened, beleaguered the city. Now Daizan had a daughter, the Mílíka of Firdausí, and it so happened that in the course of the siege, which lasted four years, she and Shápúr fell in love with one another, and he promised, if she would get him possession of Hatra, to make her his queen. This she accomplished, her father was put to death, and Shápúr married the traitress. Now she had a very delicate skin, and, when she was reposing on silk stuffed with raw silk, complained of discomfort. It was found that a myrtle-leaf was pressing against her! Shápúr asked her on what her father had fed her. She told him on cream, marrow, the honey of virgin bees, and the finest wine. "And yet," he said, "though you have known me only a short time you love me better than your father who gave you such food!"<sup>2</sup> He had her bound by the hair to the tail of a wild horse and dashed to death. By rights this story should come under the reign of Shápúr, son of Ardashír, or of Ardashír him-self: it has been brought, however, into connexion with that of Shápúr, son of Urmuzd, by the romantic addition, found in Dinawarí and Firdausí, that the treacherous daughter—the Mílíka of the Sháhnáma—was the child of the king of Hatra by the daughter of Narsí—Dukhtnûsh in Dinawarí and Nû-sha in Firdausí—whom he had made captive in the raid above mentioned. Now Shápúr, son of Urmuzd, was noted far more than his predecessor, Shápúr, son of Ardashír, for his dealings with the Arabs, and is said to have acquired his title of "Zu'l Aktáf" on account of the severity with which he treated them. Zu'l Aktáf has been explained to mean that he dislocated their shoulders, or removed their shoulder-blades, or strung his captives together in couples by boring their shoulders and passing a ring through them. Originally, however, the title may have been one of honour only, "the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 294.

<sup>2</sup> This ignores the fact that love often ousts affection when the two come into antagonism. Hence the popularity in the past of *Gretna Green*. The story seems to show that, though the lady was in love with Shápúr, he himself was only pretending. That in the classics of Nisus and Scylla is very similar. Nisus, king of Megara, had a lock of hair on which his existence depended. He had too a daughter named Scylla. Minos, king of Crete, besieged Megara, and Scylla, who had fallen in love with him, cut off from her father's head the fatal lock, and he perished in consequence. Minos, like Shápúr, was not really in love and, like him, had the lady put to death.

broad-shouldered" like Dirúzdest "the long-handed."<sup>1</sup> Be this as it may, the above story was adapted in Iránian legend to make it applicable to the better known of the two first Shápúrs and the one whose dealings with the hated Arabs redounded most to the credit of the empire. It is, as will be seen, softened somewhat in the adapted version. The half Persian descent of Málíka is meant to account for and excuse her treachery,<sup>2</sup> and Shápúr's conduct to her is not brutal. A trace of the earlier and harsher version may survive in the words of Táír,<sup>3</sup> where he says in effect, anticipating those of Brabantio to Othello :—

"She has deceived her father and may thee."<sup>4</sup>

But we are not told that Shápúr acted on the hint.

The scene of the story is laid by Firdausi in distant Yaman, the 'Inánians, of whom Táír is made the king, being a tribe in that region.

In one place Firdausi refers to Nūsha as the "daughter of Bahrám."<sup>5</sup> She was the granddaughter.

§§ 4-10. Here we have another historical confusion but on a larger scale. Sháhs, Emperors, times, and events are confounded and transformed so into terms of romance that it is not easy to "disentangle from the puzzled skein the threads of" history.

First, Shápúr, son of Ardshír, is confused with Shápúr, son of Urmuzd.

Secondly, the Emperor Valerian is mixed up with the Arab prince Odenathus and with the Emperors Julian and Jovian. The Bazánúsh of the Sháhnáma, who in the reign of Shápúr, son of Ardshír, represented Valerian, here represents Jovian, and Julian, the Yánuš of Firdausi, leads, not as Cæsar but as Cæsar's brother, an expedition against Persia.

Thirdly, a few dates are instructive. Shápúr, son of Ardshír, reigned A.D. 241-272. Shápúr, son of Urmuzd, reigned A.D. 309-379. The Emperor Valerian was taken prisoner in A.D. 258. Julian died, and Jovian made his treaty with Persia, in A.D. 363. Odenathus, prince of Palmyra, was assassinated in A.D. 267.

Fourthly, the historical events here confused are :—

The second war of Shápúr, son of Ardshír, against Rome in

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. v. p. 281, and for the above generally NT, p. 33 *seq.* and *notes*, p. 53 *seq.* and *notes*.

<sup>2</sup> So too the damsel who rescues Shápúr from his imprisonment by Cæsar is described as being an Iránian by birth. See pp. 338-9.

<sup>3</sup> p. 334.

<sup>4</sup> Act i. scene 3.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 334.

which the Emperor Valerian was taken prisoner and died, some years later, in captivity.

The ensuing war of Odenathus, prince of Palmyra, against the conqueror of Valerian, in the course of which he captured part of the great king's harem, and marched up to the gates of Ctesiphon.

The expedition of the Emperor Julian against Shāpūr, son of Urmuzd, which ended in a disastrous retreat, his own death, and the humiliating treaty made by his successor Jovian.

§ 4. Already we have had instances of kings and chiefs going in disguise to spy out the enemy. So Rustam made his way into the camp of Suhrāb,<sup>1</sup> and Sikandar to that of Dāra,<sup>2</sup> to the court of queen Kaidifa,<sup>3</sup> and to the palace of the Faghfūr.<sup>4</sup> We shall find too Bahrām Gur, in the next volume, going as his own ambassador to Shāngul, king of Hind. The exploits of Odenathus in connexion with Shāpūr, son of Ardshir, and the capture of the great king's harem, seem to be adumbrated here in the capture and misfortunes of the second Shāpūr at the court of Caesar. Valerian, whose own capture is here post-dated, is credited with the successes of the Arab chieftain. Shāpūr's misfortunes are ante-dated as a foil to his final triumph later on.<sup>5</sup>

The denouncer of Shāpūr at the court of Caesar may be identified perhaps, historically, with the Persian prince Urmuzd (Hormisdas) who was imprisoned by the nobles after the death of his father Urmuzd, son of Narsi, and after a long captivity escaped in A.D. 323 to the Romans, by whom he was held in high honour, and accompanied Julian in his campaign to the East.<sup>6</sup>

We have had an instance already in the case of Garsiwaz of the punishment of being sewn up in fresh raw hide, which contracts and stiffens as it dries, and is very painful if not always fatal. According to some accounts the Khalifa Walid (A.D. 705-715), under a misapprehension, had his great general Muhammad Kāsim put to death in this fashion,<sup>7</sup> but this does not seem to be historically correct.

§ 5. Sympathetic damsels are much in evidence in this portion of the Shāhnāma as aids to embarrassed heroes. One helped Ardshir Pāpakān,<sup>8</sup> as did two more according to the *Karnāmak*.<sup>9</sup> Shāpūr is aided thus here for the second time.<sup>10</sup>

Such scenes of lowly life as that between Shāpūr and the

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 170.

<sup>5</sup> NT, p. 65, and *note*.

<sup>6</sup> NT, p. 51, and *note*: RSM, pp. 149, 194. Cf. p. 318.

<sup>7</sup> Vol. iv. p. 265: EHI, i. p. 209.

<sup>8</sup> p. 217.

<sup>9</sup> p. 201.

<sup>10</sup> For the first time see p. 331.

gardener become more frequent in the latter part of the poem.

§ 7. Here we have, for the second time, the account of the capture of Valerian, post-dated by more than a century. His treatment in captivity is represented as being much more severe in this version on account of his rough usage of the Sháh which, historically, represents the successes gained by Odenathus over Shápúr, son of Ardshir, after the defeat of Valerian. The proposed terms of peace similarly are more stringent. Their parallel is the building of the bridge at Shúshtar.<sup>1</sup>

§ 8. This appears to be an account of Julian's expedition to the East in A.D. 362-3. It will be seen that he is not regarded as an Emperor but as the Emperor's brother. This was necessary owing to the form that the story took in Firdausi's authorities. Caesar (Valerian) was supposed to be still alive though a captive and was engaged in collecting all the ransom that was possible from Rûm.<sup>2</sup> The throne was not technically vacant, so Yánuš could not be Emperor. Later on the troops of Rûm make a new choice altogether and elect Bazánúsh (Jovian). The repetition of the story of Valerian has the effect of dwarfing the more historically placed expedition of Julian, and Julian's status suffers accordingly.

§ 9. Here, after the overthrow of Yánuš (Julian) Bazánúsh (Jovian) is elected Emperor in succession, romantically, to Caesar (Valerian), historically, to Julian. Historically, too, the negotiations for peace were begun a few days after the death of Julian, and during the retreat of the Roman army, not by the newly elected Emperor Jovian but by Shápúr, who took that step to delay the retirement of the Romans till some definite agreement had been arrived at. The result was a great triumph for Persian diplomacy.

§ 10. That we have here a version of the historical treaty of peace between Jovian and Shápúr is clear from the stipulation for the cession of Nasíbín (Nisibis)—one of the most important provisions of the actual treaty. Shápúr had besieged it three times already without success. There was a stipulation that the Roman inhabitants of that and other places ceded should have liberty to withdraw. Tabarí tells us that in the case of Nisibis they were replaced by twelve thousand natives of Istakhr and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

Both the accounts of Valerian in the Sháhname agree that he ended his days in captivity, and the general consensus of historians is to the same effect. Whether he died a natural death or not is uncertain, but the former seems the more probable.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> p. 357.

<sup>3</sup> NT, p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *id.* pp. 33, 66, and *notes*; RSM, pp. 86, 87, 125.

Shápúr continued the ancient practice of transporting conquered populations to new homes, settling them in cities that he himself had built, restored, or renamed. The two in Khúzistán mentioned in the text—Khurram Ábád and Kinám-i-Asirán—may be represented by the ruins of Karkh and Shus, now known as Iwán-i-Kerkh, not far from the ruins of Susa. Pírúz Shápúr is better known as Ambar, a city on the Euphrates.<sup>1</sup> It served as the original capital of the 'Abbasid Khalifat but was superseded before long by Baghdád.

§ 11. There was so much in common between the first two Shápúrs—similarity of name, wars with the Arabs and the Romans, religious excitement and consequent persecution, and, in addition to all this, the fact that the six intervening Sháhs had failed to impress their personalities on the popular mind and consequently left hardly any trace of themselves in popular tradition—that it was only natural for events properly belonging elsewhere to gravitate towards the later, longer, and more important reign of the two. We have had several instances of this tendency already, and here we have another in the case of the famous heresiarch. Mání, whose career, historically speaking, ended before the second Shápúr was born. Mání's life seems wholly to have been included within the third century A.D.—a period when new religious ideas were being disseminated broadcast, and old religions were passing through a season of revival. In the Sásanian empire Zoroastrianism, Christianity with its many gnostic offshoots, and Judaism, were striving to assert themselves, and in the midst of the ferment Mání was born A.D. 215-16. He is said to have begun his public career as a religious teacher on Sunday, March 20th A.D. 242—the day apparently of the coronation of Shápúr, son of Ardshir.<sup>2</sup> Shápúr, at first disposed to listen to the new teacher, afterwards banished him, and he remained in exile till he was allowed to return by Shápúr's successor, Urmuzd, who allowed him evangelical freedom and presented him with a place of residence. Urmuzd's reign, however, proved to be a very brief one, and under the next Sháh, his son or brother, Bahráh, Mání is said to have been flayed alive, and his body, stuffed with straw, exposed on one of the gates of Gund-i-Shápúr, which gate consequently became known as "the Mání gate." According to some accounts Mání was recalled by Bahráh and afterwards put to death by him or by his son and successor, but at all events the great gnostic died before the time of Shápúr, son of Urmuzd. Mání's followers of course were persecuted.

<sup>1</sup> On Shápúr's cities see NT, p. 57 *seq.* and *notes*.

<sup>2</sup> NT, pp. 47 and *note* 412 *seq.*

Máni's teaching was an eclectic one, and the materials for it were drawn from the various Faiths amid which he grew up or with which he came into contact later on. No doubt in his enthusiasm he hoped to find a formula that would reconcile them all. In the result he was regarded by the orthodox of each as the false friend who is worse than the open enemy, and suffered accordingly. His chief opponents were the priests of the state-religion—Zoroastrianism—just then in the flowing tide of its revival, but the arguments put into the high priest's mouth by Firdausí are more Mohammedan than Zoroastrian. Máni's offence, so far as his doctrine was distinguished from Christianity, lay in his high and pure asceticism, which was antagonistic to the somewhat self-indulgent Faith of Zoroaster. The Zoroastrian was a family man, a flesh-eater, and a wine-drinker. The Manichæan was not permitted to injure any living thing, whether animal or plant, for the sake of obtaining food, and was a celibate, a vegetarian, and a rechabite.

The followers of Máni were famous for the neatness and ornamentation of their sacred books, and this gave rise to the notion that Máni himself had been a painter. There are allusions to him in that capacity in the Sháhnáma.<sup>1</sup>

§ 12. For Ardshír see the next reign.

## § 1

*How Shápúr, Son of Urmuzd, was born forty Days after  
his Father's Death, and how he was crowned*

Passed forty days. then like the shining sun  
A babe was born of that fair dame. The archmage  
Named him Shápúr and gave a feast for joy.  
Thou wouldst have said: "The infant is all Grace,  
And wisdom is his banner and his shade."  
For forty days they revelled, then prepared  
The child a royal throne. The nobles came  
With golden girdles and hung over it  
The crown of gold. That babe of forty days  
They set, when fed and swaddled up in silk,  
Upon his glorious father's throne beneath

<sup>1</sup> See Vols. ii. p. 19 and note, v. 118.



The crown of gold ; the chiefs all homaged him,  
 And showered gems. An archimage by name  
 Shahrwí, wise, apt, and potent, came and sat  
 Upon a golden seat to serve the babe  
 As minister, and with good rede and justice  
 Ruled o'er the world. He led the folk to good.  
 Collected troops and treasure, and adorned  
 The palace and the throne, for young Shápúr,  
 Who grew in stature with the passing years.

C. 1432

Attended by that wise archmage the Sháh  
 Was sitting on an eve in Taisafún.  
 When Sol grew wan, and night's dark livery showed,  
 A din rose at the way o'er the Arwand.  
 "Greet they?" he asked.

"O famed and valiant prince!"

The archmage answered thus the little Sháh,  
 "The merchants and the workmen are returning  
 Home from their shops and, as they pass each other,  
 They fear to jostle, for the bridge is narrow  
 So crow like cocks at drum-beat."

Said Shápúr:—

"Ye famous sages and my counsellors!  
 Then let us have two bridges. one to go,  
 The other to return, so that our subjects,  
 Both soldiers and civilians, may cross  
 At ease ; our treasury shall bear the costs."

The archmagés all joyed much that that young Tree  
 Was showing leaf and, as the young Sháh bade,  
 Their chief gave orders for a second bridge.  
 His mother's heart rejoiced, she gave him tutors,  
 But by his rapid progress he outstripped them.  
 At seven years old he went upon the ground  
 To learn the art of war and play at polo ;  
 At eight he learned the etiquette of courts ;  
 Thou wouldst have said that he was Sháh Bahrám.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P. Perhaps Bahrám Gúr is meant. Cf. p. 378 *seq.*

He exercised himself in every grace,  
 And made Istakhr his royal residence  
 By his own glorious fathers' precedent,  
 Men pure, accepted, and preeminent.

## § 2

*How Táír, the Arab, carried off the Daughter of Narsí and  
 married her, how Shápúr went to Yaman to fight him,  
 and how his Daughter fell in Love with Shápúr*

Anon, and when the world-illuming crown  
 Grew bright, Táír, the 'Inánian lion-hearted,  
 Whose scimitar would bolden heaven, led forth  
 From Rúm and Párs, from Kurdistán, Bahrain,  
 And Kádisíya, up to Taisafún  
 C. 1433 A host surpassing all compute of knowledge.  
 He gave the country up to pillage. Who  
 Could fight or fly him? Hearing tell of Núsha,  
 Who was the Sháh's aunt and a youthful Spring,  
 He sought her palace, while all Taisafún  
 Was full of hue and cry. They bore her off,  
 And made her prisoner, for he and his  
 Were coarse and ignorant. When she had spent  
 One year of grief and care with him she bore him  
 A daughter like the moon and like Narsí,  
 Thou wouldst have said, when he had crown and  
 throne.  
 Her father called her Málíka on seeing  
 That she was fit for queenship. When Shápúr  
 Was six and twenty, and had grown to be  
 A valiant, sun-like monarch, he reviewed  
 His troops upon the plain and chose him out  
 Twelve thousand warriors and for each a camel  
 Wind-footed, and a hundred guides withal.  
 The warriors mounted, leading each his steed.

Then too the Sháh himself and his own meiny  
 Took seat upon their beasts. He girded up  
 His royal belt for raiding and pursued  
 The monarch of the 'Ínánians—Táír,  
 That over-weening one, that raging Lion—  
 And slaughtered many of his warriors.  
 Which when Táír perceived he showed his back.  
 Then followed hue and cry, and many captives  
 Were taken while that host fled to a stronghold  
 Within Yaman; men, women, children wailed.  
 Shápúr led forth such forces that the ways  
 Were barred to ant and gnat. He found<sup>1</sup> Táír  
 With troops within the hold, and turned from him  
 The means of fight and flight. The siege continued  
 A month both day and night, the garrison  
 Ran short of food. One morning full of ardour  
 Shápúr, the hero, mounted on his steed  
 With bow in hand, a kingly, black cuirass  
 Upon his breast and black flag fluttering o'er him.  
 Now Málíka looked from the castle-walls.  
 And saw that flag and head of chiefs, whose cheeks  
 Were then like rose-leaves and his hair like musk,  
 His lips like jujubes and his breath musk-scented.  
 Both sleep and peace went from her: with her heart  
 Possessed by love, she sought her nurse, and said:—  
 "This sun-like Sháh, come hither for revenge,  
 Is great, my very blood, and him I call  
 'The world' because he is the world to me.  
 Now bear a message for me to Shápúr;  
 He came to fight us, bid him to a feast  
 With me. Say: 'Thou and I are of one race,  
 And of the seed of brave Narsí as well.  
 Moreover I will aid in thy revenge,  
 For I am of thy kindred—Núsha's daughter.  
 If thou wilt marry me the hold is thine,

C. 1434

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

And with the palace thou shalt have its Picture.  
 Arrange all with my nurse and pledge thy word  
 Of honour.’”

She replied: “As thou commandest  
 So will I speak and bring thee news of him.”

When night and murk took kingship of the earth  
 From sea to sea, when it became pitch-hued,  
 The hills like indigo, the stars like lamps,  
 And thou hadst said: “Three hundred thousand lights  
 Have been suspended from the eighth heaven,” the nurse  
 Went quaking, full of fear and fright. Her heart  
 Was sundered through her terror of Táír.  
 She reached the camp, approached a trusty man,  
 And said: “If thou wilt bring me to the Sháh,  
 Thou shalt receive from me a crown and ring.”

That wise and prudent man conducted her  
 Toward the valiant monarch from the gate.  
 She came, with her eyelashes swept the ground,  
 And told him all. Her words rejoiced the Sháh,  
 Who smiled. He gave her fifty score *dínárs*,  
 A necklace, pair of bracelets, crown, and cloak  
 Embroidered with brocade of Chín, and answered:—  
 ‘Speak much and kindly to the moon-faced maid,  
 And say to her: ‘He sware by sun and moon,  
 The girdle of Zarduhsht,<sup>1</sup> the throne and crown:—  
 “Whate’er thou askest of me, though it be  
 To cante mine own realm, thine ear shall hear  
 No angry word from me, nor will I seek  
 To part from thine embrace.”’ For I will buy her,  
 God willing, at the cost of throne and crown,  
 Of treasure and of host.”

On hearing this  
 She hurried from the camp back to the hold,  
 Informed the silver Cypress what had passed,  
 And added: “Venus is conjunct with Sol.”

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vol. v. p. 16.

She told of Sháh Shápúr, his looks and height,  
All she had noted of that Moon so bright.

## § 3

*How Táír was bemused by his Daughter and how she came  
to Shápúr, who took the Hold and slew Táír*

Now Málíka, when Sol's crown westward shone,  
And on the earth its yellow flower became  
Like teak in hue, won from the treasurer  
And minister of king Táír the keys  
That oped the stores of provand and of wine,  
And sent the leaders and the veteran chiefs  
Supplies thereof with sweet narcissus-blooms  
And fenugreek. She called to her the server.  
Spake much and graciously to him, and said :—  
"Thou pourest wine to-night; give it Táír  
Neat, and keep all of them with wine in hand  
That they may fall asleep and be bemused."

C. 1435

The server answered her: "Thy slave am I.  
And only live because thou wilt it."

Now when the sun was yellow in the west,  
And murky night bade it "Avaunt," Táír  
Called for a cup of royal wine, and first  
They drank "The 'Ínánians." When one watch had  
passed

Táír slept careless of the din around,  
And all withdrew to rest, whereat that Moon  
Bade her slaves speak in whispers and undo  
With stealth the castle-gate. Now Sháh Shápúr  
Was waiting, angered at the drunken din,  
But when the light shone through the gate he cried :—  
"Our mate is sleepless fortune!"

Then he bade  
To lodge that fair maid daintily in camp.

Collected all his forces, chose out men,  
 Both mounted and afoot, approved in valour  
 And fitted for the fray, and entering  
 The hold 'gan slay, and seized the ancient treasures.  
 The more part of the garrison were drunk,  
 The rest, but half awake, prepared to fight;  
 None showed his back through fear. The noble Sháh  
 Slew many while Táír, who was made captive,  
 Came naked and, albeit unwillingly,  
 Apace before him. Hold and goods were both  
 Shápúr's. One man was rich and only one!  
 He waited till the dawn and, when Sol showed  
 Its golden cap, they set a throne of turquoise,  
 As was the custom, in the hold and held  
 An audience. When the Sháh had made an end  
 The Rose of early Spring drew near to him;  
 She wore a ruby coronet and shone  
 In cloth of gold of Chín. He seated her  
 Beside him on the throne and presently  
 Called for Táír in bonds who, when he came,  
 Bare-headed, and beheld his daughter crowned,  
 C. 1436 Knew that the sorcery was hers and she  
 Had wrought the mischief, and he said: "O Sháh,  
 And noble man! see how my child hath dealt  
 With me! Be thou too wary of her love,  
 And hold all strangers enemies henceforth."

Shápúr made answer to that miscreant:—  
 "When thou didst take the daughter of Bahrám  
 From her seclusion, and insult our race,  
 Thou didst arouse a sleeping feud."

He bade  
 The deathsman to behead Táír and fling  
 His body to the flames. The head he trailed  
 In blood contemptuously and flung away.  
 He would not let his Arab captives speak,  
 But had their shoulder-blades removed—an act

Which horrified the world. The Arabs used  
 To call him Zú'l Aktáf because he wrenched  
 Their shoulders from the spine. Thence he returned  
 To Párs where all men came and homaged him.  
 All that got quarter with their shoulders whole  
 Refused to him no longer tax and toll.

## § 4

*How Shápúr went disguised as a Merchant to Róm, how he  
 was taken by Cæsar, and how Cæsar ravaged the Land  
 of Írán*

Thus heaven revolved awhile, then changed its favour.  
 The day came when Shápúr, although possessed  
 Of crown and treasure, dreaded what might be,  
 And, when two watches of the night had passed,  
 Called his astrologers and asked concerning  
 The imperial throne and weal and woe to come.  
 The astrologers brought forth their astrolabes,  
 And cast his prospects of repose and rest <sup>1</sup>  
 To see if ill would reach, or Grace divine  
 Grow greater with, the Sháh. This seen, they said :—  
 “Great king, world-lord, of ardent heart and pure !  
 A grievous, painful task confronteth thee,  
 But what none dareth tell.”

Shápúr replied :—

“O learned men and seekers of the way !  
 By what device can this be made to pass  
 From me, and mine ill star not tread me down ?”

The astrologers made answer : “None, O Sháh !  
 By courage and by knowledge can escape  
 The revolution of the restless sky ;  
 We cannot strive with it ; what is to be

C. 1437

<sup>1</sup> Or “And banished rest and slumber for his sake.”

Will happen all, past doubt."

The noble Sháh

Rejoined : " God is our refuge from all ill,  
For He created circling heaven above,  
Created strength and weakness."

He spread out

His justice through the realm and for a while  
Was glad and free from trouble. Having rendered  
The whole land prosperous he greatly yearned  
To visit Rúm and see the state of Cæsar,  
His army, treasury, and puissance.  
He told his minister, a paladin  
Both just and prudent, of his secret purpose,  
But hid it from all other folk, and added :—  
" Administer the realm with equity,  
For that will make you glad."

He had prepared

Ten caravans of camels—noble beasts ;  
There was a chief to every caravan.  
He loaded thirty camels with dínárs,  
The rest with jewels and brocade. He left  
The peopled parts and journeyed full of care  
Till he arrived in Rúm and saw a suburb  
Where dwelt both thanes and citizens. He entered  
The dwelling of a man of means and asked :—  
" Can I have lodging here ? "

With many greetings

The goodman said : " Receive we not such guests ? "

Shápúr abode that night, ate, and gave presents,  
Receiving back the blessings of the thane.  
At morn he packed and went to Cæsar's palace,  
Like wind, and coming to the chamberlain .  
Saluted him and gave him gifts, who asked :—  
" Who art thou ? Say, because thou art a king  
In limbs and looks."

Shápúr replied : " Not I .



I am a Persian, a religious man,  
 And with my merchandise have come from Jaz.  
 I have a caravan of silks and linens,  
 And came to court in hope to be received  
 By Cæsar. If among my merchandise  
 Aught liketh him, or of my gems and arms,  
 Let him accept such from his slave and place them  
 Among his treasures. This will please, not grieve, me.  
 The rest I shall sell boldly in reliance  
 On his protection, purchase what I need  
 In Rúm, and bear it to Írán."

The elder

Went and told Cæsar, who bade raise the curtain,  
 And granted audience. When Shápúr approached  
 The presence he gave praises as was fitting,  
 While Cæsar, gazing on him, liked him well,  
 Bade spread the board, and put all strangers forth.

C. 1438

There was in Rúm a native of Írán,  
 A man of much experience, but withal  
 Injurious, oppressive, and accursed,  
 Who said to Cæsar: "O exalted one!  
 List to my news in secret: this great merchant,  
 Who taketh our dínárs for his brocade,  
 Is, I assert, Shápúr, the king of kings,  
 In speech, in countenance, in Grace, and bearing."

When Cæsar heard he was amazed, looked black,  
 And set a watch, but kept the matter close,  
 And scanned Shápúr as he arose bemused.  
 The guard came up, and said: "Thou art Shápúr,  
 Son of Narsí, disguised."

They carried him

Off to the women's house and bound his hands;  
 None 'scapeth from the net of bale by valour.  
 What booteth to consult astrologers  
 Since all their calculations naught availed?

They lit a candle by the drunken man,

And vilely sewed him up in ass's hide.  
 All said : " The wretch hath gained an ass's skin,  
 And lost a throne ! "

There was a dark, strait cell  
 Where to they bare, and where into they flung,  
 That luckless one forthwith and locked the door.  
 Now Cæsar gave the custody of key,  
 And of that captive wrapped in alien hide,  
 To his own wife, and told her : " Give him bread  
 And water lest his soul may pass too soon.  
 If he survive awhile he will perceive  
 The worth of throne and crown, and none that is not  
 Of Cæsar's race will covet Cæsar's throne."

She locked the cell. Her own home was elsewhere.  
 She had for treasuress and confidant  
 A moon-faced girl, Íránian by descent,  
 Who knew her lineage from sire to sire,  
 And Cæsar's wife put in her charge the key,  
 And brave Shápúr fast in the ass's skin,  
 Whom Cæsar left thus straitened, and that day  
 Led forth his host. Now when he reached Írán  
 His army drew the falchion of revenge,  
 And bore off many captives. Their brave foes  
 Had none to aid them, and Írán was stripped  
 Of men and women, children and all havings,  
 Both great and small. No news came to the host  
 Of Sháh Shápúr alive or dead. Írán  
 Fled before Rúm, the land was void of folk,  
 While countless others had a Christian call,  
 And flocked before the bishops, one and all.

## § 5

*How the Damsel took Measures to free Shápúr, and how he  
fled with her from Rúm*

Time passed, the army of Írán was scattered,  
And all the while in Rúm the keepers watched  
Shápúr both day and night, howbeit the damsel,  
That was Íránian-born, rejoiced not o'er him,  
But wept for him, thus clad in ass's hide,  
Incessantly; her heart burned for Shápúr.

One day she said: "O goodly man! who art thou?  
Speak and fear not, for in this ass's skin  
Thy graceful form hath neither sleep nor rest.  
Thou wast a Cypress with the moon full-orbed  
Above it, and that moon had musk-black curls,  
But now thy cypress-form is like a hoop,  
Thine elephantine body like a reed.  
My heart is burning, mine eyes weep, for thee  
Both day and night. What wouldst thou in thine  
anguish?"

Why tell not me thy secret?"

Said Shápúr:—

"If thou art well disposed to me, my Fair!  
I ask thy promise—one confirmed by oath  
That thou wilt keep it—not to tell my foes  
My secret, but be mindful of mine anguish;  
Then will I tell thee what thou wouldst—the truth."

The damsel sware to him by the All-just,  
The cincture of the priest<sup>1</sup>—that stalwart guide—  
The life of Christ, the Passion of the Cross,  
The master of Írán and love and fear:—  
"I will not tell or benefit thereby."

<sup>1</sup> Or of "Shammas," a legendary founder of Fire-worship, in which case we may suppose that the lady, to make assurance doubly sure, pledged herself by both religions.

C. 1440

He told all, hiding neither good nor bad,  
 And said to her : " Now if thou wilt perform  
 My hest, and pledge thy heart to keep my secret,  
 Thy head shall be exalted o'er all dames,  
 The world be at thy feet. At meal-time thou  
 Shalt bring warm milk and supple me this hide.  
 Soak it because it shall become world-famous,  
 And after my decease the men of wisdom  
 Will tell the tale for many a year."

The damsel

Used her endeavours to obtain hot milk,  
 But furtively and speaking 'neath her breath.  
 On coming back with milk she used to set  
 Upon the fire a bowl thereof, then bear it  
 In secret to Shápúr, informing none.  
 In two weeks' time the ass's hide was moistened,  
 And when with aching body and full heart  
 Shápúr came forth therefrom he said to her  
 In confidence : " O pure one, vigilant,  
 And kindly in thy deeds ! we must advise.  
 And frame a stratagem to 'scape from Rúm :  
 May blessing never light on such a land ! "

The damsel said to him : " Tomorrow morn  
 Our chiefs will set forth to the banquet-place.  
 There is a feast in Rúm that men and women,  
 And children will attend. Whenas the queen  
 Shall leave the city for the merrymake  
 Upon the plain, the coast will be all clear,  
 And I will manage, reckless of mishap ;  
 My wits shall get for thee two steeds, two maces,  
 And bow and arrows.

Hearing this, he praised  
 That worshipful, foreseeing maid, grew bold,  
 And in this case took wisdom for his guide.

Whenas the Fount of Light sank in the west,  
 And night drew o'er its head the Veil of Pitch,

Shápúr mused much: "What will she do tomorrow?"

When Sol arose in Leo, when day waxed  
And slumber waned, the great men of the city  
Went to the feast. That damsel, like a man  
Full of resource, began to ply her schemes.  
She had the empty palace to herself,  
Had lion's heart withal and leopard's claws.  
She brought two noble horses from the stalls,  
Chose weapons fit for valiant cavaliers  
With all that she had need of in dínars,  
In pearls, in rubies, and in every thing.  
When all was ready, and the night had come,  
The pair resolved to act and started forth  
Toward Írán, both full of secret joy.  
In quest of safety. Night and day alike  
They hurried onward, neither slept nor ate,  
And from the city through the thornbrakes reached  
A province civilised. When steeds and riders  
Grew faint with hurrying they sought a place  
To halt at, came upon a pleasant village  
With gardens, park, and pleasancess, and there,  
Toil-worn and fleeing from calamity,  
Knocked at a gardener's door, who hurried out —  
A hospitable man of kindly heart—  
And, seeing two with armour, spears, and helms,  
Said to the Sháh: "Why is this visitation?  
Whence hast thou sprung at this untimely hour,  
Armed for an expedition?"

C. 1441

Said Shápúr:—

Good friend! thou askest much of one astray!  
A traveller I, a native of Írán,  
And bent on flight. I am in Cæsar's danger  
And in his troops', and never may I see  
His head and crown! If thou wilt be my host  
To-night, and play the marchlord's part discreetly,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* in receiving those who have just crossed the frontier.

Sure am I that one day 'twill profit thee ;  
The tree that thou shalt plant will bear thee fruit."

The gardener said : " The house is thine, the gardener  
Himself thy guest. Whate'er I can I will,  
Informing none."

Then Sháh Shápúr alighted,  
He and the damsel, and the gardener's wife  
Gat ready food for them as best she could.  
When they had eaten bread they turned to wine.  
And had a lowly chamber dight. The gardener  
Gave to Shápúr the wine forthwith, and said :—  
Drink thou to whom thou wilt."

" My host," he answered.

" And gardener eloquent and excellent !  
The man that bringeth wine should drink it first,  
When first in years and wisdom. Thou art older  
Than I and, since thou furnishest the wine,  
Thou shouldst begin."

" Great sir !" the gardener said.

" The man of Grace should drink first. Lead the way  
As old in wisdom though more young in years.  
I seem to scent a crown upon thy locks ;  
Thy visage too is like the sun."

Shápúr

Smiled, took the wine, and sighed. " O pious man !"  
He said, " what tidings from Írán hast thou ? "

C. 1442

The gardener said : " O thou of kingly mind !  
May foe ne'er harm thee. May the ills that Cæsar  
Hath brought upon the Íránians now befall  
Our foemen. All are scattered in Írán,  
And tilth and crop remain not. Massacre  
And pillage have dispersed our mighty folk,  
While many have turned Christians and come zoned  
Before the bishops, many don priests' caps  
That they may have a land and resting-place !"

The other said : " Where then was Sháh Shápúr,

Who used to shine resplendent as the moon  
Upon Urmuzd. that Cæsar thus should dare,  
And fortune overcast the Íránians' lustre?"

The gardener answered him: "Exalted one!  
Be majesty and pleasure ever thine.  
No tidings of his whereabouts, alive  
Or dead, hath reached the Íránian potentates:  
The people of Írán are slaves in Rúm."

The gardener, the Sháh's host, wept bitterly,  
And added: "Thou shalt stay three days and then  
My house will be the lustre of the world  
Because a sage said when the world was young:—  
'Unwise is he whose courtesy is scant  
To guests: black fortune will ensure him want.'  
So tarry, rest, and take a cup of wine,  
And when thy heart is merry tell thy name."

Shápúr said: "Good! Our host is our Great King,  
At present."

He abode, ate, and conversed,  
That night, and when morn rose above the mountains.  
When rose the Golden Banner from the dales,  
The master of the garden visited  
His guest, and said: "Good day to thee, and may  
Thy head be o'er the rain-clouds. This abode  
Was not a fitting resting-place for thee,  
Nor was the season suited for repose."

Shápúr replied: "My friend! I should prefer  
This house to crown and throne. And now bring forth  
A Zandavasta and thy sacred twigs  
That while I mutter I may ask thee questions."<sup>1</sup>

He did according to the Sháh's command,  
Made the twigs ready and the place of prayer.  
Then as he prayed the Sháh said: "Tell me truly  
Where the high priest is now."

His host replied:—

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 80, *s.v.* *Bàn*, and *Bursum*

"Sweet-tongued and holy man! I can discern  
His house from here."

The Sháh said privily:—

"Request some seal-clay of the village-chief."

C. 1443

The gardener got it and returned at once.  
The world-lord pressed his signet on the clay,  
Returned it to the gardener with his thanks,  
And said to him: "Give this clay to the high priest,  
And mark his words."

That morn the gardener  
Went with the impress of the royal signet,  
But on arrival found the portal barred,  
And armed men stationed round. He clamoured loudly  
To be admitted and proceeded straightway  
Before the high priest, showed the signature,  
And did obeisance. When the high priest looked,  
And saw the impress, that wise statist's heart  
Began to throb with joy and, weeping greatly  
Upon that name, he asked: "What man is this?"

The gardener said: "My lord! the cavalier  
Is staying at my house and hath with him  
A Moon, slim cypress-like, wise, fair, and graceful."

The high priest said: "Now as to this aspirant,<sup>1</sup>  
What is he like in stature and in face?"

The gardener answered: "One that ne'er hath seen  
Spring, and a cypress by the water's side,  
Would yet at sight of this man's looks and stature  
Find music in his heart. His arms are like  
A camel's thighs, his chest is like a lion's,  
His cheek like blood. Shame reddeneth at his grace,  
The crown's decore proceedeth from his face."

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.



## § 6

*How the High Priest and the Captain of the Host, hearing  
of Shápúr's Arrícal, went to him with the Troops*

The wise high priest, while listening to the gardener,  
Perceived with his shrewd mind : " This Lion-heart  
Can be none other than the Sháh ; his mien  
Befitteth but the throne ! " and seeking out  
A wary messenger he sent to tell  
The captain of the host : " The Grace of Sháh  
Shápúr is manifest. Assemble troops  
From every side."

The high priest's messenger  
Came speeding to the captain of the host.  
Who gladdened at the words and then and there  
Set both his cheeks upon the ground, and said  
To God : " O righteous Judge ! I serve Thee only.  
Who ever thought that Sháh Shápúr and army  
Would see each other more ? O one just God,  
The Master of the world and Guide to good !  
I thank Thee."

When night raised its sable flag, C. 1444  
And stars began to twinkle round the moon,  
Troops gathered from all quarters, and wherever  
Chiefs were they made their way, by ones and twos,  
Toward that city and reached joyfully  
The hospitable gardener's door. Now when  
The troops had gathered, that good man approached  
The Sháh who bade that they should be admitted  
Although his court was lowly. As they came  
They bent their faces to the ground before him.  
The Sháh embraced the chieftains and began  
To wail his woes, told of his sufferings  
Within the ass's skin, of Cæsar's words,

And what that fair Íránian slave had done  
 For love of him : “ I have through her and God  
 Preserved my life. May Fortune smile on her.  
 Grant but a virtuous slave and thou wilt be  
 The slave of such though king and glorious.  
 I am the slave of this fond slave whose heart  
 Is open and who keepeth secrets well.  
 Wherever I have forces, and my rule  
 Is recognised, send thither men and give  
 The tidings. Scatter scouts upon the roads,  
 Secure them, and the one to Taisafún  
 In chief. The news must not transpire. If Cæsar  
 Hear of me that the Grace of king of kings  
 Appareth he will come, destroy my host,  
 And break the Íránians’ hearts and backs. We cannot  
 Withstand him yet or cope with his lush fortune,  
 But when the high priest cometh and shall bring  
 Troops we will bar the road to ants and gnats.  
 We will be instant then and take new order  
 To clear our garden quietly of weeds,  
 To every corner spies shall be dispatched,  
 And outposts be on guard by day and night.  
 Thenceforth I give no Rúman liberty  
 To sleep in peace or lay his armour by.”

## § 7

*How Shápúr made a Night-attack, and how Cæsar was taken*

Shápúr, whose troops were soon six thousand strong,  
 Sent veteran chiefs to spy out Taisafún,  
 C. 1445 And notify his high and glorious court  
 Of Cæsar. Instantly they went to find  
 How matters stood, then told the exalted Sháh :—  
 “ No thought hath Cæsar save for wine and chase.  
 His troops are scattered everywhere to pillage.

There are no guards or sentries day or night,  
His troops are like a flock without a shepherd.  
He seeth not a foe on any side,  
And so it pleaseth him to live at ease."

Shápúr rejoiced ; his troubles turned to wind.  
He chose three thousand of the Íránians,  
All horsemen mailed on barded chargers. armed  
Himself, and marched on Taisafún by night.  
He marched by night and turned aside by day.  
His route lay over wilderness and mountain  
By track or no track, and two leagues and more  
Ahead were scouts till Taisafún was nigh.  
In the third watch he reached the camp of Cæsar  
Of whom he felt no fear, heard no man's voice,  
No sentries' challenge and no tinkling bells.  
Tents and pavilions covered all the waste.  
Who wotted of that onset ? In his tent  
Lay Cæsar drunk, his troops were all abroad.  
Shápúr, the valiant, gave his royal steed  
The rein, on seeing this, led on his powers  
Against the camp, and grasped his massive mace.  
Rang cloudward clarion. mace. and Indian bell ;  
Rose battle-cry and tumult everywhere.  
Thou wouldst have said : " May be the heaven is rent.  
And through the air blood droppeth from the sun !"  
Gleamed Káwa's flag, gloomed night, flashed violet  
swords ;

Thou wouldst have said : " The air is raining them ;  
The world is in a mist ! " Heaven disappeared  
Amid the dust, the stars drew in their skirts,  
And brave Shápúr wrecked worthless Cæsar's camp.  
They slew twelve thousand Rúman cavaliers  
And over, fired the camp, dashed heaven to earth,  
And in the end made Cæsar prisoner.  
His good stars grew averse. Among the tents  
They captured many of his nobles, horsemen

Elect and brave, and put them into bonds.

Such is the action of the lofty sky  
At whiles up-lifting and at whiles low-laying,  
At whiles delighting and at whiles affraying!

The innocent that hath humanity

Is best; almighty God is his ally.

When it was day, when night withdrew its skirt,  
And Sol's flag showed aloft, Shápúr commanded  
A scribe to come with writing implements.  
They wrote to every province, to each king,  
And chief. Shápúr began: "Our heart-felt praise  
Be to almighty God who helpeth others  
To good but hath no need of others' help.  
Since Cæsar hath kept not God's laws, but sown  
Naught but the seed of wrong within Írán,  
Bonds chafe him sorely, for he had not wisdom  
To guide his soul. He hath resigned to us  
The crown of kingship and reserveth only  
His infamy. His host and court are broken  
By God's own might who pointed out the way.  
Those Rúmans whom ye capture in your cities  
Must have their portion of the scimitar.  
Seek ye all justice, do as I command,  
And swear allegiance unto me afresh."

A cameleer came to each quarter quickly,  
And brought the letter of the ardent Sháh,  
Who left the camp for Taisafún and there  
Held session safely with his counsellors,  
And, having donned the ancestral crown, gave thanks  
To God, the Giver of all good. He bade  
A scribe to go inside the prison-house,  
And make a list of all the captives' names.  
There were a thousand and five score and two  
Of Cæsar's kindred and high rank in Rúm.  
The world-lord lopped the hands and feet of those  
That had been chief in ill, and then commanded

To bring in Cæsar, lord of Rúm. The guard  
 Brought him from prison like a man insane.  
 That tyrant, when he saw Shápúr's crown, wept ;  
 He rubbed his visage red upon the ground,  
 And swept it with his lashes, grovelling,  
 And blessing crown and throne.

C. 1447

“ O thou compact  
 Of ill,” the Sháh said, “ Christian and God's foe,  
 Ascribing unto Him who hath no mate,  
 No period, and no origin, a son !  
 Thou art a very knave, a lunatic,  
 A miscreant, fool, and utterest naught but lies,  
 Which are an evil, unilluminating fire.  
 Where are thy counsel, modesty, and heart  
 Inciting thee to good, if thou art Cæsar ?  
 Why bind me in an ass's hide and so  
 Fling greatness to the dust ? I came to feast  
 In merchant's guise, I came not forth to fight  
 With drums and troops, but thou didst clothe thy guest  
 In ass's skin and march against Írán.  
 Now shalt thou feel the clutch of valiant men,  
 And seek no more to fight Írán.”

‘ O Sháh ! ’

Said Cæsar, “ who can 'scape God's ordinance ?  
 The royal throne put wisdom far from me,  
 And made my soul a hireling of the Dív.  
 Thou wilt be famous, doing good for ill,  
 Because thy name ne'er will grow old, and thou  
 Wilt compass all thy longing by thy prowess.  
 If I have safeguard for my life from thee  
 Wealth and dinárs are worthless in mine eyes,  
 Then will I be a slave about thy court,  
 And seek for nothing but to grace thy throne.”

The Sháh replied : “ Vile wretch ! why didst thou  
 turn

This country upside down ? If all the spoil

That thou didst bear to Rúm (ne'er mayst thou look  
 On that cursed land again!) thou wilt restore  
 Back from thy house to this exalted folk;  
 Next, if whate'er was harried in Írán,  
 And made the lair of lions and of pards,  
 Thou wilt recover at thine own expense,  
 And in requital for thine evil deeds;  
 Next, if for those Íránians whom thou slewest  
 Thou choosest Rúmans of the royal race,  
 And givest me ten for every one of ours,  
 Surrendering their lives as hostages,  
 And I will take but men of Cæsar's stock  
 To be with me here in this happy land;  
 And, next, if for each tree felled in Írán,  
 (None well-disposed would fell the trees of others)  
 Thou plant another, reinstate all walls,  
 And thus abate the anger in our hearts,  
 Shall I not bind thee as thou bindest me?  
 Can I forgive thee for the ass's skin?  
 If thou shalt fail in aught that I have said  
 My men shall rend thy skin from head to foot."

C. 1448

As soon as he had finished his demands  
 Shápúr, the world-lord, as the conqueror  
 Split with his dagger both his prisoner's ears,  
 And having bored his nostrils put a bit  
 Therein in memory of the ass's hide,  
 And loaded both his feet with heavy chains;  
 The guard moreover bare him back to ward.

They held review and muster, and demanded  
 The treasury-key. The monarch massed and paid  
 The host, then, bent on justice and revenge,  
 Marched from Írán upon the coast of Rúm.  
 All that were in the desert and that land  
 They slew and set the houses there on fire,  
 So that the world was lighted by the blaze.  
 When news reached Rúm: "Our fertile lands are wasted,

And in a night-attack illustrious Cæsar  
 Hath been made captive," all the people wept,  
 And at Shápúr's name were consumed with dread.  
 "Ungenerous Cæsar wrought this woe," they said.

## § 8

*How Shápúr went to Rúm and fought with Yánuš, Cæsar's  
 Brother*

Though Cæsar's sire was dead, his mother lived;  
 He had a younger brother too—Yánuš—  
 A generous and potent atheling.  
 Troops mustered at his gate, his warlike mother  
 Gave them a donative, and said to him :—  
 "Avenge thy brother: seest not that a host  
 Hath come forth from Írán?"

He beat the drums,

And carried out the Cross. The Cross was great,  
 The army fierce. The hosts met face to face;  
 The warriors had no rest. The ranks were ranged:  
 A shout went up; Yánuš led on the van.  
 Black dust-clouds rose, and none could see his way  
 Amid the murk. Upon one flank were mountains,  
 And on the other, where the troops were massed,  
 A river ran. The din of battle rose,  
 Sword, mace, and arrow flashed, while azure-dim  
 Was air with dust of horsemen, spearheads gleamed.  
 And banners fluttered while the stars looked down  
 Upon that strife—all wreak and malison.

C. 1449

The warriors of Rúm all girt their loins,  
 Like furious lions, for that strife. The air  
 Was lapis-lazuli, the ground was iron,  
 Dark dusk rose cloud-ward, and thou wouldst have  
 said :—

"The air is all a mist whence diamonds pour."

The Sháh's troops likewise girt their loins for blood-shed.

Thus blew the blast of battle till the sun  
Grew dim. They slew until earth's surface turned  
To iron with the breast-plates of the slain.  
Then from the centre Sháh Shápúr advanced  
His battle, calling on his left and right,  
And on his meiny. Sháh and chiefs made hot  
Their steeds, earth trembled, and the armies reeled.  
He charged the Rúman host, and great and small  
Were one. Aware that he could not withstand  
The Sháh, Yánus fled with his troops, pursued  
By valorous Shápúr, who robbed the air  
Of lustre with his dust-clouds. On all sides  
He piled the foe in heaps, smirched earth with brains,  
And slew so many of the host of Rúm  
That all the plain was heads and feet and trunks.  
No host and Cross remained upon the field,  
No crucifix and bishop in the holds.  
He took such spoil on all sides that the troops  
Were in amaze. He gave it all to them,  
Reserving to himself but Cæsar's wealth,  
Who had seen travail in amassing it,  
And found his travail end not with his treasure !  
The host of Rúm, assembling, said of him :—  
“ Be such chief ours no more ! May Cæsar's name  
Cease out of Rúm ! The girdle of the priests,  
And their archbishop's crozier are consumed !  
So now for us Rúm and Kannúj are one,  
Because the call of Christ's Faith is fordone ! ”



## § 9

*How the Rúmans placed Bazánúsh upon the Throne of Cæsar :  
his Letter to Shápúr and the Answer*

There was a man of noble lineage,  
And of the famous Cæsars' stock withal.  
A man of wisdom, Bazánúsh by name,  
Fraught with good counsel both in mind and tongue,  
To whom the army said : " Be Cæsar thou, C. 1450  
This very day the captain of the host ;  
The troops will be attentive to thy words :  
Illume the crown and renovate the throne."

They set for him the throne of ivory  
Whereon he sat in all his glory crowned,  
While all the Rúmans hailed him as the Cæsar.  
He sat and mused on war and battlefield,  
And, knowing that to strive in fight against  
The exalted Sháh would bring disaster, chose  
An envoy shrewd and modest who could speak  
Wise words with gentleness—a scribe expert,  
Experienced, learned, wise, and well approved—  
Set him hard by, dictated subtle words,  
And wrote a letter full of benisons  
From God almighty on the king of earth :—  
" Be thy crown ever bright and all the great  
Thy slaves. Thou know'st that pillaging and bloodshed,  
And harrying the innocent, are hateful  
To noble men both in Írán and Rúm.  
If this feud first began about Íraj  
'Twas settled by the might of Minúchihr.  
Now Salm is dust, and Túr is swept away,  
In vengeance. If Sikandar and Dára  
Embroider us now that feud is obsolete  
In Rúm ; the one good fortune left, the other

Was slain by his two ministers, while Cæsar,  
 If he be cause, is galled within thy prison  
 By fetters. Rúm must not be desolate,  
 For never there hath been a land like Rúm.  
 Now, if thy purpose is to waste and slay,  
 The Rúmans cannot either fight or flee.  
 Their wives and children are thy prisoners.  
 Or wounded by thy swords and shafts. 'Tis time  
 To minish wrath and vengeance: wrath and Faith  
 Ne'er fare together. Be our ransom then  
 All our possessions, for this feud is wasting  
 Our lives. Be kind, burn not so many cities.  
 Such days must cease. The Maker of the world  
 Will not approve a world-lord set on wrong,  
 And vengeance. May He bless the Sháh. and may  
 The Sháh's exalted star encrown the moon."

C. 1451      The scribe laid down his pen when he had written  
 That royal letter whereunto they set  
 The seal of Cæsar, and the ambassador  
 Set forward to the Sháh. The wise man came,  
 And tendered Cæsar's letter to Shápúr  
 Of glorious race, who, when they read to him  
 The letter, showering on him those fair words,  
 Was gracious, wept, and bent his warrior-brows.  
 He wrote at once an answer and detailed  
 All that had happened both for good and ill;  
 He said: "Who sewed his guest in ass's hide?  
 Who lighted up the mart of ancient feuds?  
 If thou art wise arise and come to me,  
 Thou and thy honest counsellors, for I  
 Have granted quarter and I will not fight.  
 The world is never straitened to the wise."

The messenger returned with this reply,  
 And word for word discharged his embassy.

## § 10

*How Bazánúsh went to Shápúr and made a Treaty of Peace*

When Bazánúsh saw that reply the heart  
In his pure body throbbed with joy. He bade  
A hundred nobles quit fair Rúm with him.  
They made up sixty asses' loads of drachms,  
Of gems, and full-dress robes, and thirty thousand  
Dínárs for largess gathered from all sides.

They went before the Sháh with naked feet  
And heads all bare, and, as they poured dínárs,  
Bestrewed the gold with gems. Shápúr received  
The Rúmans graciously and seated them  
In due degree. He said to Bazánúsh :—  
“From Rúm no lack of curst and unjust men  
Hath come. Where there were cities in Írán  
Now there are thorn-brakes. I demand redress  
For what hath been laid waste and made the lair  
Of pard and lion.”

Bazánúsh replied :—

“Say what thou wilt and since thou gav'st us quarter  
Frown not upon us.”

Said the noble Sháh :—

“If thou wouldst have full pardon for the wrong  
Thou must pay tribute in dínárs of Rúm—  
Two hundred thousand thrice in every year,  
And further give up Nasíbín to me,  
If thou wouldst end my vengeance.”

Bazánúsh

Replied : “Írán, Arabia, Nasíbín  
Are thine, and I agree to this vast tribute  
For we can not withstand thy wrath and vengeance.”

Shápúr agreed by treaty not to march  
On Rúm thenceforth, excepting by permission

In friendly wise, that Rúm might not be injured.  
 Then he dismissed those magnates graciously  
 And honourably, on their departure marched,  
 And thanked his Maker much. He sought Istakhr—  
 The world-famed glory of the land of Párs—  
 Rejoicing.

When the news of these events  
 Reached Nasíbín the people rushed to arms.  
 Exclaiming: "We will not let Sháh Shápúr  
 Take Nasíbín or bring an army hither  
 Because he is not Christian but observeth  
 The Zandavasta and the cult of Fire.  
 He will not hear us when he cometh hither,  
 And we will not accept the Zandavasta,  
 And ancient Faith."

The populace prevailed,  
 The Faithful mounted for the war. When tidings  
 Reached Sháh Shápúr that Nasíbín rebelled  
 He was enraged against the Christian Faith,  
 And set a countless host upon the march.  
 He said: "Applaud I cannot an evangel  
 Whose author suffered death among the Jews."

For one whole week they fought; the city's gate  
 Grew all too narrow for the combatants;  
 The Íránians slew a multitude of chiefs,  
 And placed those that survived in heavy bonds.  
 The citizens wrote to the Sháh for quarter,  
 Who pardoned them and bade his host withdraw.

He gained renown in all parts of the earth,  
 He gained supremacy o'er all the world.  
 Men used to call him "The victorious Sháh,"  
 And long did he possess the throne and crown.  
 She who had freed and given him his greatness,  
 Whom he named Diláfrúz-i-Farrukhpái,<sup>1</sup>  
 Was dearer to him than all other fair.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* The lucky-footed lustre of the heart.

Moreover on the gardener he bestowed  
 Great treasure and dismissed him well provided :  
 But Cæsar stayed in prison and in bond,  
 In abject, evil case, and lasso-bound,  
 While all the treasure that he had in Rúm,  
 And toiled to gather in from every side,  
 He had conveyed and given to Shápúr.  
 He lived awhile with sighs upon his lips,  
 Within his prison-house, and there he died,  
 And let another have the crown of might.  
 Then Sháh Shápúr dispatched the corpse to Rúm,  
 Encrowned with musk upon a bier, and said :—  
 "This is our end but where we shall find rest  
 I know not. One is covetous and foolish.  
 Another wise and dowered with Grace, but life  
 Will pass with both. The good and abstinent  
 Alone are blest."

C. 1453

He mounted on the throne  
 Of kings and ruled the world awhile. Thereafter  
 He settled many folk for good or ill  
 Within the land of Khúzistán and built  
 A city for his prisoners : folk at large  
 Shared not therein.<sup>1</sup> 'Twas called Khurram Ábád.<sup>2</sup>  
 But who were they who shared that pleasant place ?  
 The men whose hands Shápúr had stricken off  
 Had this assigned to them as their abode ;  
 They had it all, and every year a robe  
 Of honour. He erected too in Shám  
 A city which he called Pírúz Shápúr,<sup>3</sup>  
 And in Ahwáz a third with palaces  
 And hospitals, Kinám-i-Asírán<sup>4</sup>  
 They called it ; prisoners there had rest and ease.  
 He reigned until he passed his fiftieth year  
 Of sovereignty ; the age had not his peer.

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.<sup>2</sup> Pleasant Abode.<sup>3</sup> Victorious Shápúr.<sup>4</sup> The Prisoners' Nest.

## § 11

*How Mání, the Painter, came to Shápúr with Pretence of  
being a Prophet, and was slain*

There came from Chín a man of eloquence,  
Whose peer in painting earth will not behold,  
By which accomplishment he gained his ends.  
He was a man of might by name Mání.  
He said: "I prove my mission by my painting,  
And am the greatest of evangelists."

He came from Chín, asked audience of Shápúr,  
Soliciting his help in that evangel,  
And speaking with such unction that the Sháh,  
Filled with misgivings and keen interest,  
Convoked the archimages and held talk at large  
About Mání: "This suasive man of Chín  
Hath plunged me into doubts about his Faith:  
Hold converse with him; ye may be converted."

They said: "This man—a worshipper of pictures—  
Is not the equal of our own high priest;  
Hear what Mání saith and then call for him:  
Mání will be dumfounded in his presence."<sup>1</sup>

C. 1454      The Sháh bade that Mání should come who spake  
At large, discoursing with the archimages,  
In presence of the Sháh, of Light and Darkness<sup>2</sup>  
Until Mání was checked in full career  
By what the high priest said to him concerning  
The ancient Faith: "Thou worshipper of pictures!  
Why layest thou thy daring hand on God—  
The Being that created Heaven above,  
Created space and time, with light and darkness,  
Therein, and is supreme of principles?  
The nights and days of high, revolving heaven

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

<sup>2</sup> Lit. of white and black.

Are both thy source of safety and mishap.  
How canst thou take a picture for a proof.  
And disregard the counsel of the Faithful,  
Who say that holy God is One, and thou  
Hast no alternative to serving Him ?  
If thou wilt give these pictures motion, then  
Thou mayst appeal thereto. Thy proof, thou knowest  
Is naught, and no one will esteem it valid.  
Were Áhriman God's equal, darksome night  
Would be like shining day, and both would be  
Of equal length throughout the year, and neither  
Would in their revolutions wax or wane.  
The Maker of the world is compassed not  
By thought, for He is higher than thought and space.  
Thy words are those of lunatics. Enough !  
No one will side with thee."

He spake much else.

For he was one of knowledge and of courage.  
Máni was all confounded by the words,  
His favour changed, the king was wroth with him.  
So that his days were straitened, bidding some  
To drag him from the court disgraced, and said :—  
" This worshipper of pictures is unfit  
To live, so since he causeth turmoil here  
Flay him from head to foot, and let his skin  
Be stuffed with hay, and then, that no one else  
May make pretences to like dignity,  
Hang up the skin upon the city-gate,  
Or on the wall outside the hospital."

So did they. All the people blessed the Sháh,  
And cast dust on the body of the slain.

The fortune of Shápúr was such that men  
Saw in his garth no thorn upon the rose.  
He was so just, so wise, and politic.  
Brave, bounteous, active, that not anywhere  
Was left a foe, or evil e'en a lair.

## § 12

*How Shápúr made his Brother Ardshír Regent till his own  
Son should grow up, and how his Days ended*

C. 1455 When he had naught to hope for from high heaven,  
For he had passed his three score years and ten,  
He called a scribe, the high priest, and Ardshír,  
His younger brother, youthful still and crowned  
With justice and with wisdom. Now the Sháh  
Had but one son—an infant—named Shápúr,  
Not yet matured by fortune, so the king,  
In presence of the magnates and the scribes,  
Said to Ardshír: "If thou wilt make a pact  
With me in all good faith, and pledge thyself  
To keep it, that what time my son shall come  
To man's estate, and when the breath of greatness  
Shall breathe on him, thou wilt resign to him  
The treasure and the throne and crown, and be  
His loyal minister, I will commit  
To thee this crown of kingship and transfer  
Withal to thee the treasure and the host."

Ardshír agreed before the great and wise  
To give up to the child when grown to manhood,  
And fit for diadem and throne of might,  
The kingship and intreat him lovingly.  
Whereat Shápúr, in presence of the lords,  
Gave the world's crown and signet to Ardshír,  
Then said: "Take seriously the world's affairs.  
Know, O my brother! that an unjust king  
Regardeth not the interests of the realm,  
But yearneth to fill up his treasures,  
Exceeding all his officers in greed.  
Blest is the upright king that serveth God  
Because in him his subjects' hearts delight;  
He groweth rich by equity and bounty,



He leadeth every one toward the Faith,  
 He guardeth all his kingdom from the foe,  
 He lifeth to the clouds his head and crown,  
 He gathereth wealth by justice and in peace,  
 Disperseth trouble from the heart by largess,  
 He passeth o'er the offences of ill-doers,  
 And ever practiseth humanity.  
 He that hath sought these virtues will attain  
 To wisdom and right rede and watchfulness.  
 Kings must be wise and teach both young and old,  
 For subjects not instructed in God's way  
 Will err, and if the king is wroth with such  
 He violateth justice and the Faith.  
 Man's heart and brain are joint kings of his body,  
 The other members are the soldiery.  
 When, then, the heart and brain have been defiled,  
 And lost to good advice in their despair.  
 The life within that body is distraught :  
 Will troops left chieffless live on happily ?  
 Left in the dark they are dispersed and cast.  
 A corpse, to dust. So with an unjust king :  
 The world <sup>1</sup> is turned by him all upside down.  
 He will be held accursed when he is dead.  
 And men will know him as ' The impious Shāh.'  
 Keep both thine eye and body in the Faith.  
 For eye and body both belong to God.  
 The king who chooseth any other way  
 Should wash both heart and hands of this our world.  
 He scattereth his subjects from his realm.  
 His lieges from his gate, ignoring all  
 The sage's words which cleanse thy heart of guile.  
 The tyrant is accursed : haunt not the portal  
 Of men intent on greed. Know, O my brother !  
 That from a king the sage expecteth much—  
 First, that he be victorious, not turning

C. 1456

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

From foes in fight ; again, that he entreat  
 His troops with equity and recognise  
 The greatness of the high-born : whosoever  
 Is fitted for the kingship will not put  
 The men of rank into the ranks ; <sup>1</sup> next, thirdly,  
 That he be upright and defeat not justice ;  
 And fourthly, that to those who are his subjects,  
 And to the old retainers of his court,  
 He keep not tightly barred his treasury's door,  
 But from his branches drop a shower of fruit.  
 The king's gate should be not without a host,  
 And he should keep his treasure for his troops.  
 Thou wilt rejoice in treasuries increased  
 By justice, and thy troops will joy in thee.  
 Look on thy mail as thy true ornament ;  
 Some night it may bestead thee well. Trust not  
 Thy guards too much ; direct thine own concerns  
 As thou wouldst be secure though, whether thou  
 Shalt prove obscure or thy own age's lustre,  
 Death past all doubt will come to thee at last."

The brother, hearing this, wept sore. Shápúr  
 Wrote his last wishes out, lived on one year,  
 Then passed, and left this saying in men's minds :—  
 " Sow not within the world the seed of greed  
 Because thy days will pass, and foes enjoy  
 The product of thy toils. Whene'er the laws  
 Both of Urmuzd and of Bahman <sup>2</sup> are kept  
 This palace will become a happy home."

C. 1457

Bring tulip-tinted wine, O Hášhimí ! <sup>3</sup>  
 From jars that never need replenishing.

Why seek I, who am deaf at sixty-three.  
 The world's grace and observance ? Now I sing  
 (Mark thou) the story of Ardshír, the king.

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vol. iii. p. 327.

<sup>3</sup> I.e. O descendant of Muhammad's great-grandfather (Hášhim) !

## XXXI

### ARDSHÍR, BROTHER OF SHÁPÚR

HE REIGNED TEN YEARS

#### NOTE

The reign of Shápúr, son of Urmuzd, was preceded, as we have seen, by those of six Sháhs, none of whom left any mark on Iránian legend, and it was followed by those of three others no less insignificant. Some of the six preceding Sháhs had been men of importance historically, but even this cannot be said of Ardashír (Artaxerxes II. A.D. 379-383) and his two successors.

Ardshir must have been either an elder brother of Shapur or else, like him, a posthumous child. At any rate he must have been seventy years old or more at the time of his accession. Shápúr is represented elsewhere in the Sháhnama as brotherless,<sup>1</sup> but historically this was not the case.<sup>2</sup>

Ardshir is credited by most authorities with a reign of four years only. Tabarí says that he was deposed by his subjects.<sup>3</sup>

#### § 1

*How Ardashír sat upon the Throne and gave a Charge  
to the Officers*

Whenas Ardashír sat in the royal seat,  
And graced the throne of old Shápúr, he girt  
His loins and called the Írániáns, seating them  
Beneath the golden throne, and thus he said:—  
“I would not that the process of high heaven  
Should injure any. All the world shall be

<sup>1</sup> See p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 318.  
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<sup>3</sup> NT, p. 70.

Within my peace if it obey my will :  
But if this giddy world prove recusant  
We will take order for it. Now my brother  
Left me the world in trust because his son  
Is but a child. Our blessings on his soul,  
For he hath purged the earth of wicked men.  
Whenas Shápúr, son of Shápúr, shall reach  
To man's estate, and knoweth how to prize  
The crown and throne, I will resign to him  
Them and the host according to my pledge  
To Sháh Shápúr. I only hold the throne  
As viceroy and in memory of his sire.  
Know this : what we enjoy will pass away ;  
At death our travail will be turned to wind."

Through his ten years of rule he took his fill  
Of joy and lavished bounty as he would.  
He asked from no man tribute, toll, or tax,  
But made the crown and throne a charge to none ;  
Men therefore called him " The Beneficent,"  
For all felt safe with him.

Now when Shápúr  
Was fit for crown and throne Ardshír resigned  
The glorious crown, made good what he had spoken  
And, like a man, maintained his pledge unbroken.

## XXXII

### SHÁPÚR, SON OF SHÁPÚR

HE REIGNED FIVE YEARS AND FOUR MONTHS

#### NOTE

According to Tabarí, the death of this Sháh (Sapor III., A.D. 383-388) was not due to the accidental fall of a tent-pole: the tent-ropes were cut, and the tent fell and killed him.<sup>1</sup>

#### § 1

*How Shápúr, Son of Shápúr, sat upon the Throne and  
gave a Charge to the Officers*

Whenas Shápúr sat in his uncle's place C. 1458  
Most joyed but some were sorry in Irán.  
He thus harangued the noble men of lore,  
And veteran, adviceful archimages:—  
“ Know that henceforth we favour not the liar,  
For lying is not policy and that  
Ensureth greatness. Treat not niddings  
As friends and sow not weeds within the garden.  
The man of brains should make a mock of none.  
Tongues should be guarded, not imbued with bane,  
For he that speaketh much in the assembly  
Will minish his repute, but when a sage  
Discourseth, hear, for learning ageth not.  
The covetous have aching hearts, do thou

<sup>1</sup> NT, p. 71.  
365

Abstain from greed and make not friends with liars,  
 Or men of evil rede. Four qualities  
 Are needful in a man: first, being modest,  
 Just, and accomplished; secondly, sincere  
 And single-hearted; thirdly, moderate  
 And welcoming whatever fortune bringeth;  
 And, fourthly, never speaking foolishly,  
 But using fools for profit not for sport.  
 The hearts of noble men obtain both worlds,  
 But justice pleaseth not the hearts of churls,  
 Who in this world possess an evil name,  
 And in the other win not Paradise.  
 The vain withal hath but a brief career  
 Because he dissipateth wealth in folly,  
 While he is lauded that doth choose the mean;  
 He showereth benedictions on himself,<sup>1</sup>  
 God aid you, be your fortune ever bright,  
 And may He help us, for the throne of greatness  
 Abideth not with any."

Thus he said.

The nobles rose and blessed him.

C. 1450

When five years

And four months had passed by, the Sháh one day  
 Went out to hunt. the world was full of cheetahs,  
 Of hawks, and hounds, these flying and those coursing.  
 A tent was pitched to make a resting-place  
 Where when the Sháh had eaten he reposed;  
 He drank three goblets full of royal wine,  
 And, musing, drowsed. His comrades all dispersed  
 While he reclined. He slept. Then from the waste  
 A tempest rose, so great that none recalled  
 The like, and brought the wood-work of the tent  
 Down on the Sháh's head! He that had aspired  
 To win the world—the valorous Shápúr—  
 Died and resigned the royal crown to others.

<sup>1</sup> Couplets transposed.

This whirling world is evermore the same,

And constant only to the knavish one,

Who in his jugglery is void of shame

To filch from any or to foist upon.

Act, then, enjoy, disport, but fret thee not.

Why grasp at vengeance, toy with treasury?

Within this gloomy orb accept thy lot,

Seek honour, and let this world's secret be.

Discovery will make thee writhe with pain;

Then pry not, let its mystery remain.

# XXXIII

## BAHRÁM, SON OF SHÁPÚR

### HE REIGNED FOURTEEN YEARS

#### NOTE

The Oriental title of this Sháh (Varahran IV., A.D. 388-399) renders it doubtful whether he was the son of the second or third Shápúr, and the authorities differ on the point. He is supposed generally to have reigned eleven years. He was the ruler of Kirmán at the time of his accession, and to him rightly belongs the title of Kirmánsháh which Firdausi gives to Bahrán Bahrámiyán.<sup>1</sup> A seal of his, so describing him ("Varahran Kerman Malka") is extant.<sup>2</sup> Tabarí says that he built a city in Kirmán, perhaps the existent Kirmánsháhán south-east of Yazd,<sup>3</sup> and that he was killed by an arrow shot at him by assassins.<sup>4</sup>

#### § 1

*How Bahrán sat upon the Throne and gave a Charge  
to the Officers*

Wise, prudent Sháh Bahrán mourned for his sire  
Some months. When seated on the place of power  
He spake thus from the imperial throne: "This know:  
The kings that justly gather freely spend.  
May holy God be gracious unto us,  
And may the foemen's hearts be filled with smoke.  
His is all knowledge, and we are His slaves  
For weal or woe. He is supremely just;

<sup>1</sup> See p. 313.    <sup>2</sup> See RSM, p. 265.    <sup>3</sup> NT, p. 71, and *note*.    <sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 72.



His kingdom knoweth neither gain nor loss.  
 One that is rich in generosity.  
 Discreet, intelligent, and vigilant,  
 Should lock not fast his treasures, least of all  
 If he is lord of throne and diadem,  
 And if a wealth of words be thine to give,  
 Be lavish, knowledge faileth not. Incline  
 To God in good and ill as thou wilt have  
 Thy good endure. If thou acknowledgest  
 That all thy good and evil are from Him  
 Thy guerdon will be jocund Paradise:  
 But if thou choosest this world's vanities  
 Thou wilt remain unransomed in their clutch.  
 If God shall cease to keep thee 'neath His hand  
 Thou wilt abide in endless woe. I trust  
 To holy God that, when I lay my head  
 Within this darksome dust, He may account me  
 A conquering king, a Lustre of the world.  
 Is it not better then to lavish justice  
 Than to get wealth unjustly, for our labours  
 Endure here but our wealth will be past doubt  
 Our foe's. We leave our memory good or bad:  
 Forbear thine utmost to sow seed of ill."

C. 1460

When this Sháh's reign had come to twice seven years  
 The graceful Cypress of the Orchard slept;  
 The Sháh was sick awhile, his subjects grieved.  
 He had a daughter, but no son, and likewise  
 A younger brother unto whom he gave  
 Perforce the host and treasure, crown and throne,  
 And royal signet, then, when he had ruled  
 For twice seven years, this youthful world-lord died.

Old man, whose years amount to sixty-three!

Shall wine be still the burden of thy lay?

Without a warning life may end with thee;

Think of repentance then, seek wisdom's way.

May God approve this slave. May he attain  
In wisdom riches and in singing gain ;

For mid his song he plucketh at his hair,  
Yea teareth it in his obscure estate.  
No wonder, if a work—his manhood's care—  
Completed in old age, he dedicate  
To him who hath the sword—the king of kings,  
A whole head higher than his underlings.

May his throne's seat serve Luna for a crown,  
The age be wholly subject to his sway,  
For his is might and with him is renown.  
Oh ! may the crown rejoice in him, and may  
He walk in knowledge and in majesty,  
From all his foemen's clutches ever free !

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XXXIV

YAZDAGIRD, SON OF SHÁPÚR

HE REIGNED THIRTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

Yazdagird succeeds his brother as Sháh and rules wickedly. His son Bahrám is born and brought up by the Arabs, to whom he returns after a visit to, and imprisonment by, his father. Yazdagird is warned of his death by the astrologers and tries to evade his fate, but is killed by a mysterious horse. The Irínians, resolved that none of his family shall succeed him, elect Khusrau. Bahrám, supported by the Arabs, claims the throne, proves his right to it by ordeal, and becomes Sháh.

NOTE

The authorities are divided on the question whether Yazdagird (Isdigerd I., A.D. 399-420) was a son of Bahrám, the previous Sháh, or of Shápúr. Tabarí takes the former view.<sup>1</sup> Mas'ûdí the latter,<sup>2</sup> which leaves it still uncertain as to which Shápúr—Shápúr, son of Urmuzd, or Shápúr, son of Shápúr—was intended.

Like Aknaton of Egypt Yazdagird seems to have been a man of remarkable character. He sought peace and ensued it, he attempted to win over furiously raging fanatics to the principles of religious toleration, failed in the attempt, tried to prevent persecutors from persecuting—an act which in those days was regarded as a kind of persecution in itself—assumed the title of “The Most Peaceful” on his coins, and acted up to it in his political relations with foreign states even when most tempting opportunities for aggrandisement presented themselves, was honoured, at least in legend, by being appointed formally by will the guardian of the son of an Eastern Roman Emperor—an office

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<sup>1</sup> NT, p. 72.

- MM, ii. 190.

which he is said to have accepted and faithfully executed—died a mysterious death, and received from his subjects the titles of “The Sinner” and “The Harsh.” The indictment of him in Tabari is very severe. Among his other enormities it is recorded that if any one dared to address him on behalf of another he said immediately: “How much does he pay you, for whom you ask me, or what have you received already?” on which Professor Noldeke observes that he knew his Persians. Apparently he did, and the native chroniclers, drawn for the most part from a class that could not understand or appreciate him, have covered his memory with infamy. Against them may be placed a contemporary testimony from another source:—“The good and merciful king Yazdagird, the Christian, the blest among kings, whose memory may be a blessing and his future life still more beautiful than his former; every day he did good to the poor and wretched.”<sup>1</sup> This perhaps was written after he had begun to punish the Magi for interfering with the Christians, and before Abdaas, bishop of Ctesiphon, had burnt down, and refused to reinstate, the great Fire-temple of that city<sup>2</sup>—acts that forced Yazdagird’s hand and compelled him to allow the Magi to retaliate, which they did in drastic fashion.

§§ 2-5. This account agrees closely with that given in Tabari,<sup>3</sup> but scarcely can be regarded as historical, being, as Professor Noldeke says of the latter, too poetically finished.<sup>4</sup>

§ 2. Surúsh is the name of the messenger of Urmuzd, but is used here as a rhyme-word. Hushyár, the name of the other astrologer, means “wise.” In Tabari the astrologers advise the Sháh that Bahráh should be brought up in a foreign land.<sup>5</sup>

Nu’mán was prince of Híra during the reign of Yazdagird and was succeeded by his son Munzir. Firdausí reverses the relationship, Munzir being the more prominent historically of the two. The poet makes him monarch of Yaman.<sup>6</sup>

§ 6. It is highly probable that such a youth as Bahráh did not get on well with his father, and he may have been sent to Híra for a while in semi-disgrace.

The name of the Roman ambassador that pleaded for him—Tainúsh—is a form of Theodosius, the reigning Eastern Roman Emperor at the time—Yazdagird’s ward according to the legend.<sup>7</sup>

§ 7. We have here one of the legends localized in Firdausí’s own neighbourhood, Sav being the spring of Tús—the poet’s birth-place. Similar instances of such localization have occurred

<sup>1</sup> NT, p. 74, and notes.

<sup>2</sup> RSM, p. 275.

<sup>3</sup> NT, p. 85 *seq.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*, note.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 86.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*, note, and cf. p. 387.

<sup>7</sup> See p. 371.

already.<sup>1</sup> Tabari, however, says that Yazdagird's death is supposed to have taken place in Gurgin (Hyrcania or Mazandarán), and omits the details about the presage of the astrologers and the expedition to the spring of Sav. According to Tabari the horse was sent in answer to the prayers of Yazdagird's oppressed subjects. Professor Noldeke thinks that conspirators took advantage of the absence of the Shah in distant Hyrcania to murder him and then, to cover themselves, spread abroad a fiction to account for his end, and that the various stories of the death of this Sháh may be referred to a common origin—the version of the *Bástán-náma* made by Ibn Mukaffa.<sup>2</sup>

§§ 8–13. This account agrees closely with that of Tabari.<sup>3</sup> Historically it would appear that Yazdagird, at the time of his death, had another son living—Shápúr—whom he had made king of Armenia some years previously. Shápúr, hearing that his father was in ill-health, returned to court and after Yazdagird's death attempted to seize the throne, but there was another candidate for it whom the nobles preferred, and Shápúr was assassinated. On some of Yazdagird's coins a second name appears, which may be read either as Ardashir or Bahrám.<sup>4</sup> There seems no doubt that Yazdagird had made himself so unpopular with the Persian nobility and clergy that they were anxious that no son of his should succeed him. Bahrám, moreover, was considered probably to be too much under Arab influence as Tabari expressly states.

§ 10. As soon as Jawánwí sees Bahrám he is conscious that he is in the presence of the rightful Sháh, on whom the divine Grace of kingship already had descended.<sup>5</sup>

§ 12. The selection of a successor to Yazdagird by a process of elimination is not in Tabari.

We had instances of the mutilation of prisoners in the reign of Shápúr, son of Urmuzd.<sup>6</sup> It is said too that Alexander the Great, on approaching Persepolis, was met by a band of about 4000 Greek captives whom the Persians had maltreated grievously.<sup>7</sup>

§ 13. Bahrám is said to have been twenty years old at the time of his accession.<sup>8</sup> It was followed by a great persecution of the Christians and war with Rome. He had to put himself right with the Magi and also to find employment for his turbulent chiefs wearied of the political self-restraint of Yazdagird, The Most Peaceful.

<sup>1</sup> Vols. i. pp. 235, 296; iii. 14; iv. 295; v. 202.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 16. and NT, 77, and *not.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. too pp. 221, 251, 406.

<sup>7</sup> HQC, v. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* 91 *seq.* <sup>5</sup> RSM, 277 *seq.*

<sup>6</sup> See pp. 323, 334, 348, 357.

<sup>8</sup> NT, p. 98.

## § 1

*How Yazdagird sat upon the Throne and gave a Charge  
to the Officers*

C. 1461

When Yazdagird became the world's great king  
 He gathered all the soldiers of the realm,  
 Assumed the crown which once his brother wore.  
 At whose sad death he joyed, and thus harangued  
 The notables: "All ye disposed to justice!  
 Make first your benisons to God, your hearts  
 All jubilant and laughing through our justice.  
 I will let not the wicked live who strive  
 To compass evil. He that cometh to us  
 For justice shall have rest from fraud and falsehood,  
 I will increase his state and banish greed  
 And vengeance from the heart. We will consult  
 None but the great men and the archimages.  
 Wise and shrewd-hearted: but the vicious man,  
 Intoxicate with power. tyrannizing  
 The helpless, and elated with conceit  
 Of his own wealth, will we withstand and quell,  
 But multiply our favours to the poor.  
 The neck of him that heedeth not our wrath,  
 And fareth insolently in our eyes,  
 Is longing for an Indian sword, his body  
 To pillow in the dust. Scan well our bidding,  
 And, thus endeavouring, make your breast-plate  
 wisdom."

Thereat the men of mace and scimitar  
 All shook like willow-trees.

Now when his power  
 Waxed strong his love waned as his greatness grew;  
 He scorned the sages and grew negligent  
 Of royal usages. The governors,

The paladins, the notables, and all  
 The learned and noble sages, were as wind  
 To him; his dark soul had grown tyrannous;  
 Both love and justice ceased within his heart;  
 He answered no petitions; he misprized  
 All men alike and paused not on their faults.  
 All that were at his gate as ministers—  
 The Lustre of his fortune and his crown—  
 Agreed to speak not of the land to him,  
 And all men writhed with fear and died of fright  
 Because of him. When envoys came, or subjects  
 That clamoured for redress, a minister,  
 When notified, would learn their business.  
 And then with warm and kindly words dismiss  
 The envoys shamefastly, and say: "The Sháh  
 Will not transact affairs; ye cannot see him.  
 I have acquainted him with all your case,  
 But in his judgments right hath little place!"

## § 2

*How Bahrám Gúr, Son of Yazdagird, was born and sent  
 to be brought up by Muncir, the Arab*

When of his reign seven years had passed, and all  
 The archmages were in travail and dismay.  
 In Farwardín, when the eighth year began,  
 And showed the world the sun which they adored,  
 Upon Urmuzd's day there was born a child  
 With good stars and earth-brightening presages.  
 His sire forthwith gave him the name Bahrám,  
 Rejoicing in that little one. At court  
 There were astrologers, for it is well  
 To hearken to their words. One was a noble  
 With Grace and sense, an Indian chieftain named  
 Surúsh, another hight Hushyár, a Persian.

C. 1462

Who by his arts could curb the sky itself.  
 These prudent seekers of the Way appeared  
 Before the Sháh at his command. They used  
 Their astrolabes to take the stars and sought  
 To read the future with their Rúman tablets.  
 The stars ordained: "The child will be a king,  
 Lord of the seven climes, glad-hearted, holy."

They went before the Sháh forthwith and took  
 Their astrolabes and tablets. Thus they said:—  
 "We have collected knowledge of all kinds,  
 And learned that heaven will love this goodly child.  
 The seven climes will be his realm, and he  
 Will be a mighty Sháh and worshipful."

As soon as they had left the court, the chiefs,  
 And ministers, the holy archimages,  
 Sat and consulted o'er some shift whereby  
 The babe might favour not his sire but be  
 A righteous sovereign, "for if he hath  
 His father's temper he will wreck the realm,  
 The archimages and the paladins  
 Will not rejoice, and he will be not glad,  
 And bright of soul."

Then all the archimages  
 Approached the Sháh with open, loyal hearts,  
 And said: "This sprightly babe is far beyond  
 Reproach and calumny. Now all the world  
 Is under thy command; the toil and service  
 Of every clime are thine. Look for some place  
 Where knowledge is, and its possessors make  
 Their land rejoice, and choose among the great  
 Some statist who is lauded in that land,  
 And let this virtuous prince learn worth from him,  
 So that the world may joy in his behests."

The Sháh, on hearing this, assembled all  
 The envoys of his realm and sent them forth  
 To Rúm, to Hind, to Chín, and other lands



Inhabited. A chief, too, went among  
 The Arabs to discern if they would prove  
 A gain or loss. To every quarter fared  
 A crier seeking one to educate  
 Bahráṁ, some man of eloquence and learning,  
 Accomplishment and knowledge; so there came  
 From every clime an archmage wise, advised,  
 And fortunate, and, as they reached the court,  
 Each sought for that appointment from the Sháh,  
 Who, after welcoming them graciously,  
 Assigned to each a lodging in the city.  
 Thus on a night Nu'mán came with Munzír,  
 And likewise many famous Arab spearmen.

When all these chiefs had gathered thus in Párs  
 They came to Yazdagird, the king, and said:—  
 “We are thy slaves to hear and answer thee.  
 Who of these nobles is so fortunate  
 As to embrace the world-lord's precious child,  
 To be his teacher, and to cause the light  
 To shine upon the darkness of his heart?  
 We out of Rúm and Hindústán and Párs,  
 Geometricians and astrologers,  
 Philosophers and men exceeding wise,  
 Men of affairs and rhetoricians,  
 Are all of us the dust upon thy feet,  
 And all thy guides to knowledge. See thou then  
 Which one among us is approved by thee,  
 And which of us will profit thee the most.”

Then spake Munzír on this wise: “We are slaves  
 Who only live in this world for the Sháh.  
 He knoweth all the worth of us, for he  
 Is as the shepherd, we are as the flock.  
 Bold, riders we, adept in horsemanship,  
 More than a match for sages. We possess  
 No readers of the stars in figures versed,  
 But we have minds devoted to the realm,

And in this matter we are strong, O Sháh !  
 Moreover we are slaves before thy son,  
 And sing the praises of his majesty."

C. 1464 When Yazdagird had heard he summoned up  
 His spirits and his wisdom, and, perceiving  
 From such an outset what would be the outcome,  
 Consigned Bahrám, the precious, to Munzir,  
 For whom, for so the Sháh bade, they prepared  
 A robe of honour and exalted sky-ward  
 His head. They robed his person and then called  
 The charger of the monarch of Yaman.  
 Then plain-ward from the hall of Yazdagird  
 Went camels, horses, litters, slaves, and nurses,  
 Past count, and stretched from palace to bázár.  
 The road through the bázárs were draped with hangings,  
 And all was decked from city-gate to court.

Now when Munzir approached Yaman the men  
 And women all went out to welcome him.  
 Or ever he reached home he 'gan to seek  
 For many women of illustrious birth,  
 And made his choice among the landed folk  
 Of Persian race, among the Arabians,  
 Among the wealthy, great, and eminent,  
 And chose four ladies—two of Arab stock  
 And two of royal Persian—whose high strain  
 Was manifest in their accomplishment,  
 To serve as nurses.<sup>1</sup> Thus they tended him  
 Four years. When he had had his fill of suckling,  
 And grew apace, they weaned him, which was hard  
 To do, and reared him delicately. At seven  
 What said he to Munzir in princely fashion ?  
 "Great chief! make me not out a babe unweaned!  
 Entrust me unto tutors that are learned,  
 My time is being wasted; scorn me not."

Munzir replied: "Not yet, O prince! hast thou

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

A need for knowledge. When that time shall come,  
 And thou hast grown solicitous to learn,  
 I will not leave thee playing in the house :  
 But playing is the thing to make thee grow."

Bahrám rejoined: "Make me not out to be  
 An idle child for, though my years are few,  
 And though my neck and chest are not yet those  
 Of warriors, I have wisdom. As for thee,  
 Thou hast small wisdom though thou hast the years.  
 I am not as thou deemest. Know'st thou not  
 That one in quest of opportunities  
 Will start with matters that concern him most ?  
 To seek twice is to sacrifice one's prospects.  
 What is ill-timed is fruitless. Of man's body  
 The head is chief, and thou shouldst have me taught  
 What the great kings should know. The first thing needful  
 Is knowledge since it is the head of right.  
 And blest is he that from the first ensueth  
 His proper end."

Munzir scanned him with wonder,  
 Invoking God beneath his breath, and sent  
 Upon a dromedary to Shúrsán  
 A chief forthwith who found three archimages,  
 Accomplished men and well reputed there.  
 One was to teach the young prince penmanship,  
 And lighten the dark places in his heart :  
 The second to instruct him in the use  
 Of hawk and cheetah for his recreation,  
 As well as polo, archery, swordmanship  
 Against the foeman, how to rein his steed.  
 And to exalt himself among the brave ;  
 The third to inculcate the arts of kingship,  
 The style and business of administration,  
 And everything that he should bear in mind.<sup>1</sup>

C. 1465

<sup>1</sup> "As well as . . . . in mind," following the readings and arrangement of P.

When these archmagés came before Munzir  
They held much talk with him, and in their charge  
He placed the prince, because Munzir himself  
Was both a scholar and a warrior.

Bahrám, that seed of kings, grew so adept  
That he was competent to play the man,  
And when he heard of new accomplishments  
He longed to learn them. When he was eighteen  
The valiant warrior was like the sun;  
He needed not archmagés to instruct him  
In erudition, how to play at polo,  
In manage of the cheetah and the hawk,  
To wheel a steed upon the battlefield,  
And charge. Thus said he to Munzir: "O man  
Of honest rede! send these professors home."

Thereat Munzir bestowed great gifts upon them.  
And they returned rejoicing. Then the prince  
Said to Munzir: "Call for the spearmen's steeds,  
And bid the cavaliers to wheel before me.  
To couch their lances, and then name the price  
Of what I fancy; I will better it."

Munzir said: "O accomplished atheling!  
The keeper of my steeds is thine to bid,  
The master of the horse is all thine own;  
Why should I toil and trouble for such things  
If thou art forced to purchase Arab steeds?"

Bahrám replied: "O famous one! may all  
Thy years be satisfied with good. I want  
A steed that I may spur adown the height,  
And never draw the bridle in alarm,  
Then, having rendered him so sure of foot,  
Cause him to vie with winds upon the course,  
Because one should not press a beast untried."

Munzir then bade Nu'mán: "Go thou and choose  
A drove of our own valiant herdsman's horses:  
Go round the desert of the spearmen, see

•What chargers thou canst get.”

He hurried forth.

Chose, and produced a hundred warriors' mounts.

Bahrám, on seeing them, went on the plain.

C. 1466

And wheeled about upon them for a while.

But every steed, albeit fleet as wind,

Possessed no wings when ridden by Bahrám.

At length he chose a chestnut broad of breast,

With feet like wind, and, of another brand,

A bay. Thou wouldst have said: “A crocodile

Hath come forth from the deep!” His shoes flashed  
fire,

And from his ruddy breast fell drops of blood.

Munzir paid for the two what they were worth

(The wood of Kúfa was their native place)

And bold Bahrám accepted the two steeds,

Bright as Ázargashasp, and guarded them,

Like some fresh apple, lest a blast should harm.

One day the young prince spake thus to Munzir:—

“O man of understanding, bright of mind!

Thou hast no pretext for thus keeping me,

Not sparing me a moment from thy sight.

There is a secret impulse in the hearts

Of all that thou beholdest. As grief paleth,

So pleasure greateneth, a man. In short

Some fair-faced damsel will increase my joy.

For woman is the solace of our pains.

In woman doth a young man find repose,

Be he a monarch or a paladin:

She is his guide to Faith and to all good.

Command to have some damsels brought to me,

Some five or six, like suns and full of charm.

Perchance, when I have chosen one or two,

My thoughts will fix on justice and the Faith.

It may be too that I shall have a child

To ease my heart, the world-lord will approve me,

And I shall have the praise of every one."

On hearing such words from the youth, Munzir  
 The agéd. blessed him and then bade a man <sup>1</sup>  
 To make all haste to the slave-dealer's shop  
 Upon that quest, who brought out forty damsels  
 Of Rúm, all fit to please and soothe the heart,  
 As tall in stature as a cypress-tree,  
 All objects of desire, of charm, and grace.  
 Bahrá'm chose two. among those rosy-cheeked,  
 With rosy skins and bones of ivory.  
 One of these Stars could play upon the lute,  
 The other with her cheeks all tulip-like  
 Was as Canopus of Yaman, in height  
 A cypress, and with tresses lasso-wise.  
 Munzir paid for them when they were approved.  
 With cheeks bright as the gem of Badakhshán <sup>2</sup>  
 Bahrá'm gave thanks with smiles upon his face,  
 And spent his days at polo and the chace.

### § 3

*How Bahrá'm went to the Chase with a Damsel and how  
 he displayed his Accomplishment*

C. 1467 It happened that one day without attendance  
 Bahrá'm went with the lutist to the chase.  
 Ázáda was the Rúman damsel's name;  
 Her cheeks were coral-hued. Bahrá'm had mounted  
 A dromedary with the noble <sup>3</sup> Cypress,  
 Who had her lute in hand. She was his charmer.  
 His love; her name was ever on his lips.  
 For such occasions he required a camel,  
 And set thereon a housing of brocade,  
 While from it hung four stirrups. Thus he pricked

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

<sup>2</sup> The ruby.

<sup>3</sup> Ázáda, to pun on the girl's name.

O'er hill and dale. Two stirrups were of silver,  
 Two were of gold, and all were set with jewels,  
 And furthermore he had beneath his quiver  
 A stone-bow; that brave youth was all-accomplished.  
 He came upon a pair of deer and laughing  
 Said to Ázáda: "O my Moon! when I  
 Have strung my bow and in my thumb-stall notched  
 The string, which shall I shoot? The doe is young,  
 Her mate is old."

She said: "O lion-man!  
 Men do not fight with deer. Make with thine arrows  
 The female male, the agéd buck a doe,  
 Then urge the dromedary to its speed.  
 And, as the deer are fleeing from thy shafts,  
 Aim with thy cross-bow at one creature's ear  
 That it may lay its ear upon its neck,  
 And when the beast shall raise its foot to scratch  
 The ear that hath been tickled though not hurt,  
 Pin with one arrow head and ear and foot  
 Together if thou wouldest have me call thee  
 'The Lustre of the world.'"

Bahrám Gúr<sup>1</sup> set  
 The string upon his bow and caused commotion  
 Upon that quiet plain. Within his quiver  
 He had a double-headed shaft for use  
 While hunting on the waste and when the deer  
 Sped off, he shot the buck's two horns away  
 Much to the girl's amaze. Forthwith the sportsman  
 Shot two shafts at the doe which struck her head  
 Just where the horns should be and furnished her  
 Therewith. Her breast grew red with blood. He rode  
 Toward her mate again, set in his stone-bow  
 A bolt, hit the buck's ear, and was well pleased. C. 1468  
 For he had aimed thereat. The creature scratched

<sup>1</sup> The first occurrence of his full title—"Onager Bahrám"—as we might say "Buffalo Bill."

Its ear. Forthwith within his bow of Chách  
 He set an arrow and pinned head and ear  
 And foot together; but Ázáda's heart  
 Was vexed about the deer, and when the prince  
 Said: "When I hunt I bring them down by thousands  
 Thus," she replied: "Thou art an Áhriman,  
 Else how canst thou shoot thus?"<sup>1</sup>

Bahrám stretched out,  
 Flung her from saddle headlong to the ground.  
 And made his dromedary trample her,  
 Besmearing hands and breast and lute with blood.  
 He said to her: "O thou lute-playing fool!  
 Why shouldst thou seek for my discomfiture?  
 If I had drawn mine arms apart in vain  
 My race had been dishonoured by the shot."

When he had trampled her beneath his camel  
 He never more took damsels to the chase.<sup>2</sup>

Next se'nnight with a noble troop he went  
 Forth to the hunting-ground with hawk and cheetah,  
 And near a mountain saw a lion that tore  
 An onager's flanks. Impetuously he strung  
 His bow and notched therein a shaft three-feathered,  
 Then pinned both preyer's back and heart of prey  
 That underneath the blood-stained lion lay!

#### § 4

*How Bahrám showed his Accomplishment in the Chase  
 before Munzir*

Another week Nu'mán went with Munzir  
 To be Bahrám's companion in the chase,

<sup>1</sup> Reading with T.

<sup>2</sup> Bahrám's feelings, though the outcome of them is more tragic, are somewhat like those of De Lorge in Browning's poem "The Glove," and Ázáda, when she sought to shame Bahrám by setting him what she intended to be an impossible task, had not the excuse that the English poet ingeniously puts into the mouth of the French lady.



And took withal some Arab men of name  
As judges of his failure or success.  
Munzir desired Bahrám Gúr to display  
His horsemanship and strength before these men.  
Anon a flock of ostriches appeared,  
Each running like a dromedary loose.  
On seeing them Bahrám Gúr rushed like wind.  
He handled smilingly his bow and stuck  
Four poplar arrows in his belt. He laid  
The arrows in his bow successively  
To slay those birds, and pierced in sportsman's fashion  
Their plumes. No arrow by a needle's breadth  
Was lower than another, none more high,  
And, when the nobles went to see the outcome.  
They found the horseman's shots true to a hair,  
Whereat Munzir called blessings down on him.  
As did the other spear-armed warriors.  
Munzir said: "O my king! I joy o'er thee  
As roses joy o'er springtide. May thy Moon  
Ne'er wane, thy girdlestead be weakened never."

C. 1469

Munzir, returning to his palace, held  
Bahrám Gúr high as Saturn. Many a painter  
He sought for in Yaman. and all the best  
Assembled at his court. He bade them limn  
On silk a picture of Bahrám Gúr shooting.  
They drew with ink thereon a cavalier  
To represent him, thews and all, as seated  
On his tall camel, shooting wondrously;  
The stone-bow, lion, deer, and onager;  
His breast expanded, all his markmanship,  
And strength; the ostriches, the wilderness,  
And impact of the arrow. Then Munzir  
Dispatched a cavalier to bear the picture  
To Yazdagird, and all the host assembled  
At that communication. In amaze  
The chiefs all called down praises on Bahrám.

Thenceforth, whenever he did anything  
Of note, they sent it pictured to the king.

## § 5

*How Bahrám came with Nu'mán to Yazdagird*

The Sháh was eager to behold Bahrám—  
Bahrám? Nay rather an imperious Sun!  
That Lion said thus to Munzir: "Albeit  
I could abide however long with thee  
My father's wish inciteth me to go,  
And, since I shall be safe, mine own heart urgeth."

Munzir prepared whatever was required—  
Gifts from Yaman, exceeding all compute,  
As Arab steeds with golden furniture,  
And other things of noted costliness,  
Striped cloth, and falchions, of Yaman, and what  
The mines afforded in 'Adan. Nu'mán,  
Who was in favour at the Persian court,  
Went with Bahrám, conversing of the Sháhs,  
Until they reached Istakhr. When tidings came  
About the Sháh's son and Nu'mán the Arab,  
The archimages and shrewd-hearted sages  
Went from the court to meet them. When the Sháh  
Saw from afar Bahrám, his Grace, his limbs,  
And girth, he stood amazed at seeing him  
So tall, well trained, and fair to look upon,  
Received him well and lodged him near at hand.  
He chose Nu'mán a dwelling in the city,  
And for the prince a palace as was meet,  
Supplying him with handmaids and with slaves  
Befitting his degree. The son attended  
His sire by night and day, and had not time  
To rub his head. Nu'mán abode a month,  
And then requested licence to depart.

The monarch summoned him by night, then set him  
 Upon the throne, and said : " Munzir hath seen  
 Much toil in fostering high-born Bahráṁ,  
 And I must make him a return therefor,  
 For your esteem is as Urmuzd to me.  
 I laud the weighty counsels of Munzir,  
 For he inclineth, as I see, to wisdom ;  
 Still, while thou tarriest at our court, I trow  
 That he is looking for thee on the road."

Then of dínárs out of the treasury  
 They gave him fifty thousand with king's raiment,  
 And from the stalls ten steeds that bore a name,  
 With gold and silver trappings, gave withal  
 Slaves, carpetings, perfumes, and coloured stuffs,  
 And goods of all kinds. These Mihrán produced  
 Out of the world-lord's treasures and bestowed them  
 All on Nu'mán, son of Munzir. He opened  
 The door of largess gladly to bestow  
 Upon Nu'mán's companions fitting gifts.  
 The Shāh then wrote a letter to Munzir.  
 A letter that was worthy of the state.  
 With thanks for his entreatment of the prince.  
 Whose love the monarch of Yaman had gained :—

I will endeavour to repay thy deeds :  
 Mine own head is exalt by such a son."

Bahráṁ Gúr wrote : " My lot here is not happy.  
 It was not what I hoped for from the Shāh  
 That he should look upon his subject thus.  
 I am not here as either son or servant.  
 Or, like a younger brother, light of heart." <sup>1</sup>

He told Nu'mán, what had been hidden from him,  
 The evil ways and customs of the world-lord.

Nu'mán, when he had left the royal court,  
 Came to renowned Munzir and gave to him  
 The world's king's letter which, when he had kissed,

<sup>1</sup> Or " Or as a liege glad-hearted at a court."

He laid upon his head, joyed at those gifts,  
 And multiplied his praises. Afterward  
 The envoy spake in private to Munzir  
 At large about Bahrá'm Gúr. When the scribe  
 Had read the other letter out to him  
 His visage grew like gall. He wrote forthwith  
 An answer full of good advice: "Famed prince!  
 See that thou turn not from thy father's way.  
 C. 1471 Approve both good and evil from the Sháh,  
 Be wise and serve. When princes are submiss  
 Ills pass. Men's heads have need to compass wisdom.  
 'Tis all the doing of the circling sky,  
 And we are impotent. It hath a heart  
 All love, a heart all hate, a face all frowns.  
 The Master of the world hath framed it so,  
 And we must be disposed as He disposeth.  
 Henceforth I will dispatch to thee dínárs,  
 And royal gems, according to thy needs.  
 Let not thy heart be troubled, for thy trouble  
 Importeth more to me than heaped up treasure.  
 Lo! now by way of offering I send  
 Five hundred score dínárs and lo! withal  
 The handmaid that was erst thy confidant,  
 And thine own heart's delight behind thy curtains,  
 To brighten thy dark soul. When thou hast spent  
 All these dínárs lean not upon the king,  
 For I will send to thee still many more,  
 And things of all descriptions from this realm;  
 But do thy service, utter words of praise,  
 And serve with an increasing instance,  
 For e'en in thought thou canst not separate  
 Ill temper and the monarch of the world."

He sent off ten Arabian cavaliers —  
 Men who were loyal, shrewd, and eloquent.  
 They came to prince Bahrá'm with sacks of coin,  
 And with his loyal slave-girl. Wise Bahrá'm

Rejoiced thereat, his sorrows turned to wind,  
And thenceforth, as Munzir advised was right,  
He failed not in attendance day and night.

## § 6

*How Yazdagird put Bahrám in Bonds, how he escaped by the  
good Offices of Tainúsh, and how he returned to Munzir*

It chanced that in the banquet-hall one day  
Bahrám was in attendance on the Sháh;  
That night came on and he was wearied out  
By standing long and could not keep awake.  
His father, seeing that his eyes were closed,  
Cried violently in an angry voice,  
And bade an executioner: " Arrest him.  
Henceforth he shall not look on crown and girdle.  
Ward him within this house and then return.  
He graceth not this place of fame and fight."

Within the palace, with a broken heart,  
That year he looked not on his father's face  
Save on Naurúz and at the Sada feast  
When he drew near among the other nobles.

C. 1472

It happened that Tainúsh, the Rúman, came  
As envoy to the Sháh with purses, slaves,  
And with the tribute sent from Rúm by Cæsar.  
The king of kings received him graciously,  
And lodged him worthily. Bahrám dispatched  
This message to him: " Shrewd and potent man!  
No grievance hath the Sháh against his subject,  
Yet guiltless I am banished from him thus!  
Ask him to grant me pardon for thy sake,  
That so my withered fortunes may revive,  
And send me to my fosterers: <sup>1</sup> Munzir

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P.

Was more to me than mother and than father."

Tainúsh gave ear, accomplished his desire,  
And made Bahrá'm's afflicted heart rejoice.  
He was released from his degrading bonds,  
Bestowed much largess on the mendicants,  
And gat him ready to depart in haste.  
He called his followers and, when the night  
Was dark, led forth the company like wind,  
Exclaiming to his friends: "Thanks be to God  
For our escape and safety from distress."

When he came near the monarch of Yaman,  
Men, women, children, went to welcome him;  
So did Nu'mán, so did Munzir, so did  
Their honest spearmen. As Munzir drew nigh  
Bahrá'm the day was darkened with the dust  
Of troops, both chiefs dismounted, and Bahrá'm  
Detailed his sufferings whereat Munzir  
Wept much, and said: "What is the Sháh's star then,  
For ne'er he walketh in the way of wisdom?  
I fear that he will suffer for his deeds."

Bahrá'm said: "Never may the Sháh himself  
Grow conscious even of his own ill star!"

Munzir received him then and there as guest,  
And heaped new benefits upon the old.  
Bahrá'm Gúr's whole employ was banqueting,  
Disporting on the riding ground, gift-giving,  
And combating. Thenceforth the grief and joy  
Of Yazdagird were to his son but breezes  
Upon the day of Ard.<sup>1</sup> Time passed. Bahrá'm  
Was glad in hall and glorious on the waste.

Now Yazdagird, concerned about the realm,  
Assembled archimages from all quarters,  
And bade the readers of the stars discover  
How he would die and darkness whelm his head,  
And, when this happened, where his royal cheeks

<sup>1</sup> One of the lucky days.

Would wither. They replied : " Let not the Sháh  
Take thought of death, but when the royal fortune  
Shall founder he will seek the spring of Sav,  
Take thither with him troops with trump and drum,  
And set out joyfully to visit Tús.  
That is the place wherein the Sháh will die.  
Of such a day as that his ear hath heard not,  
And pondering such knowledge is not good ;  
It is a secret veiled by God Himself."

The Sháh, on hearing this, swore by Kharrád,  
And by Barzin, and by the yellow sun :—  
" I will not, whether I be glad or wroth,  
Behold the spring of Sav."

Three month rolled by,  
And then the Sháh's blood caused the age concern.  
One day his nostrils bled, and leeches came  
From every quarter to advise thereon ;  
They made a shift the bleeding to restrain  
One week with drugs, then it began again.

§ 7

*How Yazdagird, by the Advice of an Archmage, went to the  
Spring of Sar and was killed by a Water-horse*

An archmage said to him : " Thou hast, O king !  
Departed from the ways of Providence.  
Thou said'st : ' I will escape the hand of death !'  
But where is death not alway in full leaf ?  
The course for thee is this : by way of Shahd  
Go in a litter to the spring of Sav,  
There make thy prayer before all-holy God,  
Go in abasement round that burning soil,  
And say thus : ' I, a feeble slave, whose oath  
Hath set a snare before his soul, have come  
Now to inquire how long I have to live,

O righteous Judge!"

The Sháh approved thereof  
As helpful to his anguish, had brought forth  
Three hundred litters, and, thus borne, proceeded  
Toward the river Shahd both night and day  
Post haste, his nostrils bleeding still at whiles.  
As soon as he had reached the spring of Sav  
He left his litter, gazed upon the stream,  
Poured somewhat of the water on his head,  
And called on God, the Giver of all good.  
Anon the bleeding ceased. He ate and rested  
Among his counsellors, grew proud, and said:—  
"This was the course! Why need I tarry longer?"

Now when the Sháh in his conceit imagined  
That he had wrought the cure upon himself,  
A white steed issued from the stream, with buttocks  
Round like an onager's, and short of leg.  
C. 1474 It pranced and seemed as 'twere an angry lion;  
'Twas stately, black of belly, raven-eyed;  
It had a trailing tail, a crest, and mane,  
Black hoofs, and foamed; it was a lion-slayer.  
Thus to his chiefs said Yazdagird: "Let troops  
Encircle it."

The herdsman with the help  
Of ten rough-riders hemmed it in and took  
A saddle and a lengthy coiled up lasso.  
How could the Sháh wot of the World-lord's purpose  
In bringing him that dragon of a steed?  
It foiled alike the herdsman and the troops,  
Whereat the monarch was exceeding wroth,  
And taking up the saddle and the reins  
Drew near the horse exultingly which proved  
So docile that it did not stir a foot.  
The monarch took the bridle from the herdsman,  
And gently put the saddle on the mount.  
He girthed it. That fleet Crocodile stood stirless.



He went to put the crupper on. That charger,  
Flint-hooféd, neighed and kicked him on the head !  
His head and crown descended to the dust.

The dust received him and the dust begot.  
From yon seven heavens on high what wouldst thou  
ask ?

Their revolution thou escapest not ;  
To pay them worship is a fruitless task.  
Incline to God—the Master of the sky,  
Of sun, and moon—to Him for refuge fly.

The water-horse, when Yazdagird was slain,  
Returned like flying dust to that blue spring,  
And vanished 'neath the surface ! None e'er looked  
On such another marvel. Like a drum-roll  
Rose from the host a shout : " O Sháh ! thy fate  
Led thee to Tús."

The chieftains rent their clothes,  
And flung dust on their heads. The archimagés  
Then oped the head and body of the Sháh,  
Embalmed them both with musk and camphor, wrapped  
The dry corpse in brocade, draped therewithal  
His shining breast, and set upon his head  
A crown of musk. Then on a bier of gold.  
And on a teaken litter, he departed  
Unthroned and crownless back again to Párs.

Thus is it with this Wayside Hostelry !  
Will peace, though thou ensue it, come to thee ?  
Though meek thyself, the world is unrestrained ;  
So having eaten let the cup be drained.  
Religion is a better thing than sin  
For one that hath the power to walk therein.

## § 8

*How the Íránians took Counsel and placed Khusrau  
upon the Throne*

- C. 1475    Now when the monarch of the world was buried,  
 And from Írán the chieftains came in tears—  
 Archmages, governors, and paladins,  
 With prudent ministers, men shrewd of heart—  
 All met in Párs and gathered round his charnel,  
 As Gustaham, who rode down elephants,  
 And slaughtered them, Káran the warrior,  
 Son of Gashasp, Mílád, Árash the marchlord,  
 Parwíz the horseman of Gurzbán, and others.  
 Withal too those in hiding in Írán—  
 The great men and the leaders of the world,  
 Whom Yazdagird was wonted to abase—  
 Assembled in the city, and Gashasp,  
 The scribe—a man of eloquence—thus spake :—  
 “ Ye nobles young and old ! since God created  
 The world none hath beheld a king like this,  
 Who knew but how to slaughter and contemn,  
 To cause distress and travail, and withhold  
 His counsel and his treasure from his subjects,  
 Respecting none and setting all at odds.  
 No man hath seen a fouler Sháh or heard  
 Of one among the paladins of yore.  
 We want no more of this race on the throne,  
 And cry against his very dust to God.  
 Illustrious Bahrám is his own son,  
 His very kin in purpose, heart, and brain.  
 His talk is all Munzir. We will not have  
 A tyrant on the throne.”

Then all that were  
 Chiefs in Írán swore mighty oaths and said :—

"We will not have another of this race  
As king of kings with crown and throne of might."

That done, they rose and sought another Sháh.  
When tidings of the death of Yazdagird  
Spread 'mongst the chiefs—the monarch of the Aláns,  
The paladin of Párs, Bíward, Shikbán,  
The warrior of the world, Bihzád who had  
Barzín to sire and was of Rustam's race,  
And Sám the hero sprung from Kai Kubád—  
All said: "The sovereignty is mine from earth  
To Pisces," and the whole world was fulfilled  
With tumult, for the head that wore the crown  
Had vanished from the throne. Then in Írán  
Chief, paladin, and archmage, all that were  
Of ardent soul, met to debate in Párs:—

"Who is there worthy of the throne of kings?

C. 1476

Consider who can enter on the work,  
We see not any one, approved by God,  
To wear the golden girdle on the throne.  
And to allay the troubles of the time:  
A kingless world is but a pasturage."

There was an ancient man, by name Khusráu,  
Of generous instincts, masterful, and ardent.  
Moreover he was born of noble race,  
And one among the wealthy of the land.<sup>1</sup>  
The nobles gave to him the crown and state,  
And troops from all sides gathered at his gate.

## § 9

*How Bahrám Gúr heard of the Death of his Father  
and invaded Írán*

Thereafter to Bahrám Gúr tidings came:—  
"Heaven hath apportioned to thy sire the grave;

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P and T.

Thy father, eminent midst kings, is dead,  
 And ta'en with him the name of sovereignty;  
 They have enthroned another and acclaimed him  
 As monarch by the title of Khusrau.  
 The warriors have bound themselves by oaths:—  
 'We will not have a monarch of the race  
 Because Bahrám, the son, is like the sire,  
 And, skin and marrow, of his father's seed.' "

Bahrám Gúr, when he heard it, tore his cheeks,  
 So troubled was he at his father's death,  
 And for two se'nnights went up from Yaman  
 Wails from child, man, and woman. When Bahrám  
 Had sorrowed for a month he graced the throne.  
 Nu'mán drew near together with Munzir,  
 And Arabs of Yaman both great and small,  
 All shedding tears of sorrow with their Sháh,  
 While anguish wrought on them the effects of fire.  
 Then setting loose their tongues they counselled thus:—  
 "O virtuous and most exalted prince!  
 We came to this world to be turned to dust,  
 Came not in quest of any remedy.  
 All mother-born will die, and to God's justice  
 We must resign our hearts."

Bahrám Gúr said

Thus to Munzir: "Already is the water  
 "Grown brackish in our stream! What time my race  
 Shall lose its royal title it will lose  
 Its Grace divine, men will send up in dust  
 The desert of the horsemen and convert  
 The country of the Arabs to a ditch.  
 Consider well, assist me, and deplore  
 My father's death."

Munzir gave ear and answered

Right manfully: "This is my chance and this  
 My hunt-day on the waste. Sit on the throne,  
 Observe, and wear through all thy years the crown,

And bracelet."

All the chiefs approved the course  
Suggested by Nu'mán and by Munzir:  
They left the presence and prepared for war.  
Munzir gave orders to Nu'mán and said:—  
"Go gather our brave Lions in a host—  
Two thousand of Shíbán, ten of Kibtís,<sup>1</sup>  
All dight for battle. I will show the Íránians  
Who is the Sháh with treasure, crown, and troops!"

Nu'mán assembled him a mighty power  
Of swordsmen and of spearmen, bade them raid,  
And trample down the realm. To Taisafún  
All the salt desert route shook with their hoofs,  
The women and the children were made captive,  
There was no helper, and the world was full  
Of fire and harrying since the imperial throne  
Was impotent. News came to Rúm and Chín,  
To Turkistán, to Hind, and to Makrán:—  
"The Íránian throne is void, and none is fit  
To rule," and all made ready, in despite  
Of justice, to invade the land. They all  
Stretched out their hands toward the Íránian throne.  
And rose to claim the empire for their own.

## § 10

*How the Íránians heard of Bahrám's Pillaging  
and wrote to Munzir, and how he replied*

The Íránians heard and sought a remedy.  
Distracted by their woes they met, and said:—  
"These Rúmans, Indians, and desert-horsemen  
Have passed all bounds! We must adopt some means  
To rid our hearts and souls of this distress."

They chose a noble envoy shrewd and fluent,

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* Copts.

C. 1478

A warrior hight Jawánwí, a scribe,  
 A man of high degree and eloquence,  
 To go to parley with Munzir and say:—  
 “O noble lord! the world doth need thy name.  
 Thou watchest o’er Írán and o’er Túrán,  
 And thou art everywhere the warriors’ stay.  
 What time this throne grew void of Sháh and crown,  
 And when the marches of our land with blood  
 Were like the plumage of the francolin,  
 We said that thou wouldst rule our coasts, for they  
 Were worthy of thee. Now thou raidest us,  
 And sheddest blood with rapine and contention  
 On every side! Thou used’st not to be  
 An evildoer and wast wont to fear  
 Reproach and malison. Consider now  
 If this doth please thee and doth benefit  
 Thee with thy hoary head. There is a Judge  
 Besides thyself, One higher than all thought.  
 The envoy will narrate what he hath seen,  
 Or heard from persons in authority.”

Wise Jawánwí went from the chieftain’s presence,  
 He journeyed toward the desert of the spearmen,  
 Spake with Munzir, and gave him the dispatch.  
 The Arab chief made no reply thereto,  
 But said to him: “Wise seeker of the way!  
 Repeat the matter to the king of kings,  
 Repeat what thou hast said to Sháh Bahrám,  
 And, when thou seekest for an answer, he  
 Will point thee out the way.”

He sent a chief  
 With Jawánwí who reached the monarch’s gate.  
 That man of knowledge, when he saw Bahrám,  
 Invoked God’s blessing on the Sháh whose breast,  
 Whose stature, and whose limbs astonished him,  
 Shrewd-hearted though he was: “Thou wouldest say  
 That wine distilleth from his face, the scent

Of musk exhalet from his hair!"

That man

Of eloquence grew void of Grace and sense,  
And utterly forgot his embassy!  
Bahráw Gúr, noting his amaze, and how  
The spectacle bedimmed his eyes and heart,  
Much greeted him, showed him all courtesy,  
And set him graciously upon the throne.  
Now when the envoy seemed at ease the Sháh  
Asked: "Wherefore hast thou toiled thus from Írán?  
Hereafter thou shalt have the fruit of toil.  
And well filled treasury. from us."

He sent

A sage to take him to Munzir and say:—  
"Write thou an answer and indite fair words.  
See if the envoy hath a verbal message,  
And, if so, hear it and reply at large."

Came Jawánwí and spake, at whose wise speech  
Munzir's cheek flushed; he heard that shrewd one out,  
Prepared to make his answer to the letter,  
And said to Jawánwí: "O full of wisdom!  
All that do ill will smart therefor. Now I  
Have heard thy message and the nobles' greeting. C. 1479  
Say thus: 'Who was the first to cause the ill?  
Who needs must seek this senseless feud? Bahráw Gúr.  
The king of kings, with stature, Grace, and host,  
Is with us here, and they who draw the snake  
Out of its hole will trail their skirts in blood.  
Albeit, were I to advise, no harm  
Would come upon the Íránians.'"

Jawánwí

Had seen and hearkened to the king of kings,  
Had questioned him to see if he was fit  
For throne and greatness, fortune and success,  
And, as he listened to Munzir, conceived  
A brilliant notion, and replied: "Great sir,

Who needest not the wits of other men!  
 If wisdom failed the Íránians, many a chief  
 Among them hath been slain through that defect.  
 Now I, old as I am, still seek for fame,  
 And I will speak if thou wilt hear. Our land  
 We gladly yield to thee and brave Bahrám,  
 The king of kings. With hawk and cheetah make  
 A royal progress in Írán to hear  
 What folk will say: no harm will come of it.  
 Speak too whate'er is right. The sage will best  
 The fool. Forgo all mischievous intent,  
 And shrink not at reproach and calumny."  
 Munzir, on hearing, gave him gifts and sent  
 Him home from that fair country, well content.

## § 11

*How Bahrám Gúr arrived at Jahram with the Host of  
 Munzir, and how the Íránians went out to him*

Munzir, Bahrám Gúr, and the counsellors  
 All met in privy conclave and resolved  
 To march upon Írán. Munzir made choice  
 Of thirty thousand warlike Arab spearmen,  
 Gave ample pay, and filled the chieftains' heads  
 With vapouring.<sup>1</sup> As tidings reached Írán  
 Of these things Jawánwí himself returned,  
 And all the potentates, in deep concern,  
 Betook them to the Fire-fane of Barzín,  
 And prayed to God to change their strife to joy  
 And feasting.

C. 1480

When Munzir had led his troops  
 Across the unwatered waste, and reached Jahram,  
 Great Sháh Bahrám Gúr pitched his camp-enclosure.  
 His troops surrounded it, and to Munzir

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P and T.



He spake thus: "From the country of Yaman  
Thou hast come to Jahram, my counsellor!  
Which shall it be, when host confronteth host,  
A fight or parley?"

Said Munzir: "Invite  
The chiefs and, on their coming, spread the board.  
And speak with them. When any are provoked  
So be not thou, and we shall learn whom they  
Are fain to hail as monarch of the world.  
That known, we will take order and avoid  
Strife if soft means suffice. If they seek war.  
Turn, and display the bearing of a pard,  
Then will I make this desert of Jahram  
As 'twere a sea,<sup>1</sup> and turn the shining sun  
To Pleiades.\* I wot when folk behold  
Thy stature, mien, and lovingkindliness,  
Thy wisdom, counsel, and initiative,  
Thy gravity, thy knowledge, and thy patience,  
That they will want none else to have the crown,  
The throne, the fortune, and the pageantry;  
But if they err, and wish to take away  
The throne from thee, then will I with these horsemen,  
And our sharp swords, bring Doomsday on the world;  
Then shalt thou see me frown, and may my soul  
And body be thy ransom. When they mark  
My countless troops, the order that I take,  
Our deeds of blood, that God is our ally.  
And that the realm is thine inheritance  
By right established through a long descent,  
They will acclaim as Sháh none save thyself  
As fit for crown and to adorn the throne."

The Sháh heard smiling; his heart throbbed with  
joy.  
Now when the sun rose o'er the mountain-tops  
The mighty men and nobles of Írán

<sup>1</sup> "*de sang*" (Mohl).

Made ready to go forth to meet Bahráṁ Gúr  
 The sages were convoked, an ivory throne  
 Was set up for the prince, and he assumed  
 The glorious crown, and ordered all his court  
 According to the use of king of kings,  
 Because he was the monarch of the world.  
 On one hand sat Munzir and on the other  
 Nu'mán with sword in hand, while all about  
 The tent-enclosure there were warriors,  
 But none that was not on the Arab side.  
 Then those Íránians that were loyalists  
 Came to the antechamber of the Sháh,  
 C. 1481 Who had the curtain lifted and the names  
 Of those that entered called out at the door.  
 They came before the presence of Bahráṁ Gúr,  
 The Sháh, beheld a splendid crown and throne,  
 And shouted, saying: "Mayst thou live for ever;  
 Far from thee ever be the evil eye."

The king of kings received them graciously,  
 And ranked them every one in his degree.

## § 12

*How Bahráṁ Gúr harangued the Íránians as to his Fitness to rule, how they rejected him but promised him the Kingship if he would take the Crown from between the Lions<sup>1</sup>*

Bahráṁ said: "Princes, old, experienced chiefs!  
 The kingship is mine own by long descent.  
 Why this to-do of yours?"

"Expect us not,"

The Íránians shouted, "to endure more loss!  
 Not one of us will have thee as the Sháh.  
 Thou hast an army, but the land is ours.  
 Thy race hath caused us anguish, toil, and woe;  
 By night and day we writhe and heave cold sighs."

<sup>1</sup> This heading combines those of two sections in C.

Bahrām thus answered : “ Yea, ’tis true, for passion  
Is king of every heart. If ye reject  
Me, why thus seat another in my room  
Without consulting me ? ”

An archmage said :—  
“ None, whether he be prince by birth or subject.  
May shun the path of justice. Join with us,  
And choose a Shāh that every one will bless.”

They spent three days upon the task of choosing  
A monarch from Írán, and then wrote down  
A hundred nobles’ names—fit Lustres all  
For crown and throne and belt. Bahrām Gúr’s name  
Was one of them because he charmed the realm.  
They cautiously and anxiously reduced  
The hundred names to fifty, and of these  
Bahrām’s name stood the first, who, if he sought  
His sire’s place, sought but justice. Of the fifty  
They wrote down thirty, and they were the choicest,  
Most famous, and most potent of Írán.  
Bahrām amongst the thirty led again  
Because he was a prince—the destined Shāh.  
The wise archmages brought the thirty down  
To four, of whom Bahrām was leader still.  
When the decisive moment was at hand  
The Íránian ancients said : “ We will not have  
Bahrām who is too headstrong and self-willed,  
Though brave.”

An outcry rose among the chiefs,  
The hearts of all were darkened, and Munzir  
Addressed the Íránians thus : “ I fain would know,  
For good or ill, why ye are full of pain,  
And stricken in your souls, about the Shāh  
In his untime-worn youth ? In excellence  
No king on earth can match him, and in looks  
No moon in heaven. His poplar shafts pierce anvils,  
While with his strength he can uproot a mountain.

Though still a youth he is a sage in counsel,  
Well skilled, with bright heart and retentive mind."

The chiefs, by way of answering him, sought out  
Full many a stricken Persian, and assembled  
Out of Írán upon that plain all those  
That Yazdagird had maimed. One still survived  
Lopped hand and foot but still intact of trunk ;  
Another had lost ears and hands and tongue,  
And seemed a lifeless body, while another  
Had lost both shoulders, and Nu'mán was all  
Astound at those maimed forms. The eyes of one  
Had been dug out with nails, and when Munzir  
Beheld that sight his anger rose. Bahrám  
Was sorely grieved, invoked his father's dust,  
And cried : " O hapless one ! why didst thou close  
The eyes of thine own joy and burn thy soul  
In fire ? "

Munzir the aspiring said to him :—  
" We cannot blink such evil. Thou hast heard  
What they have had to say, now answer them,  
For kings should not be at a loss."

Bahrám

Then spake on this wise : " Chiefs and veterans !  
Ye all said sooth, and this is even worse !  
Well may I blame my sire since I myself  
Have had a sample, for he darkened all  
My fine resolves : his palace was my prison.  
When God had mercy, and Tainúsh released me  
Out of the clutches of my sire, his hook  
Had pierced me to the soul, for which cause I  
Took shelter with Munzir, because I never  
Saw kindness from the Sháh. May none possess  
His temper, for the man is lost that lacketh  
Humanity. Now I, thanks be to God,  
Have wisdom, my soul eateth of its fruits,  
And to this present I have prayed to Him

To be my guide to good that I might purge  
 My heart and spirit of such crimes as those  
 Wrought by the Sháh on these men. I will live  
 To gratify my subjects' hearts, exist  
 To worship God according to the Way.  
 I am the shepherd and my subjects form  
 My flock. Let all of us seek peace and justice.  
 Then I have character, discretion, counsel.  
 And virtue, which no unjust king possesseth,  
 Because he needs must be unjust and froward,  
 And we should weep for one that is unjust.  
 With me are greatness, kingship, and discretion. C. 1483  
 Benevolence and wisdom. From Shápúr,  
 Son of Bahráin, back to Ardshír my sires,  
 Both old and young, were Sháhs, and are my guides  
 To wisdom and the Faith, while through my mother  
 I am the grandson of king Samírán.<sup>1</sup>  
 And every way have wisdom for my comrade.  
 I am possessed of virtue, wisdom, might,  
 With courage, strength of hand, and horsemanship.  
 I know none other fit to call a man  
 In feast, in battle, or in anything.  
 I have a secret treasury well filled,  
 And men of name leal to their sovereign.  
 My justice shall make populous the world,  
 And all my subjects shall abide in joy.<sup>2</sup>  
 Moreover I will make a pact with you,  
 And pledge my tongue to God. Let us bring forth  
 The imperial throne of ivory, and set  
 The bright crown over it, then let us bring  
 Two savage lions of the wood and, placing  
 The crown between them, chain them on each side.  
 Then let the would be Sháh advance and take  
 The famed crown from the throne of ivory,

<sup>1</sup> "de la reine Schémiran" (Mohl). Possibly Semiramis is meant.

<sup>2</sup> The § ends here in C.

Place it upon his head and sit between  
 The lions as the Sháh, the crown above him,  
 And under him the throne, for we will have  
 None else, provided he be just and holy.  
 If ye reject what I have said then choose,  
 Ye all! some noble, and Munzir and I,  
 For Arab chieftains know not how to flee,  
 With mace and trenchant scimitar will send  
 The dust up from your king of kings, and strew  
 Your heads upon the moon. Now for your answer.  
 And speak advisedly in this contention."

He spake, then rose and went inside his tent.  
 All marvelled at his words. The chiefs, archmagés,  
 And all the people of Írán that heard  
 The wise Sháh's words, exclaimed: "This is the Grace  
 Of God, not craftiness or lack of wit!  
 He speaketh naught but what is just, and justice  
 Well may rejoice our hearts. For his proposal  
 About the savage lions with the throne,  
 And royal crown, between them: if they rend him  
 The Judge will not require his blood of us;  
 'Tis his own plan, and if he perisheth  
 We are content, while if he shall achieve  
 The crown he will have distanced Farídún  
 In Grace, and we will have no other king.  
 In brief we give acceptance to his words."

C. 1484

That night passed by; at dawn the Sháh came forth,  
 And sat upon the throne. He sent and summoned  
 The Íránians, and discoursed of yesterday  
 At large. The archimages cried: "O Sháh,  
 More knowing than the wise! how wilt thou rule  
 When thou hast eminence and mastery?  
 How wilt thou deal concerning right and justice,  
 So that both fraud and falsehood may abate?"

He answered thus those sages, warriors,  
 And chiefs: "I will be better than my words, •

Will make injustice and informing cease,  
 And not appoint unworthy governors,  
 Will rule the world by counsel and by justice,  
 And, having pacified it, will rejoice  
 At what my justice hath achieved, will give  
 Some of my hoarded wealth withal to those  
 In want, admonish those that are in fault,  
 And bind them if they err the second time,  
 Will pay the army promptly and rejoice  
 The sages' hearts, make tax-collectors just,  
 And turn their souls from darkness and chicane.  
 If any one shall die, not having kindred,  
 And leave excessive wealth, I will bestow it  
 On mendicants, not add it to my treasures,  
 Or be enamoured of this Wayside Inn.  
 I will hold counsel with the experienced,  
 And take such order as will frustrate greed.  
 I will consult my ministers whenever  
 I purpose some new scheme, and not dismiss  
 The assembly when a man is asking me  
 For justice, but will give to such their due,  
 Will utter righteous judgment, and requite  
 The ill with ill as well becometh rulers.  
 My witness is all-holy God, and wisdom  
 Is master of my tongue."

Then the high priest  
 And sages—well approved and veteran chiefs—  
 Exclaimed: "We are thy slaves and bow our heads  
 To thy command and will."

Then Sháh Bahrám  
 Said thus: "Ye men of wisdom and our guides!  
 If in a year I make my soul and wisdom  
 Belie my promises I will renounce  
 Crown, throne, and heritage, and sit thenceforth  
 Among the luckless."

Hearing this the sages,

The magnates, and archmagés shrewd of heart,  
 Repented of past words and, being in fault,  
 Desired to make all well again, exclaiming,  
 One to another: "Who is worthier  
 To be the Sháh than he in manliness,  
 Speech, counsel, birth? None purer hath been born  
 Within the world! God fashioned him of justice.  
 May mischief ne'er befall him. We shall have  
 All good from him, and turn us to the Faith,  
 And justice. If now we shall speak perversely,  
 And send our wits to sleep, he with such stature,  
 Such neck, and arms, is peerless in the world,  
 While at his back there is the Arab host,  
 Because in weal and woe Munzir will help him,  
 And if he win the throne that is his own  
 Who in the world is better than Bahrám?  
 What cause hereafter would he have to fear  
 The Íránians, for what are we but a pinch  
 Of dust to him?"

They said: "O prosperous one!  
 Our minds approve thee for our Sháh. None knew  
 Thy virtues, purity of person, wisdom,  
 And counsel, and we all of us have paid  
 Our homage to Khusrau, son of Pashín,<sup>1</sup>  
 As Sháh, we all are under oath to serve him,  
 And stand within his danger, so to speak.  
 Hereafter if he ruleth in Írán  
 Our borders will be desolate with war.  
 One party taketh pleasure in Bahrám,  
 Another is in favour of Khusrau.  
 Thine own plan is the right one, and the world  
 Thereafter will be under thy command:  
 Ordeal by the lions will suffice,  
 And thenceforth none will seek the sovereignty."  
 Bahrám gave his assent; 'twas his proposal.

<sup>1</sup> Reading with P and T.



At the accession of a lawful Sháh  
 The high priest with three sages used to go  
 To him, enthrone him, and felicitate  
 The throne, then bring the crown of gold—the source  
 Of glory, right, and Grace—and, crowning him,  
 Would press both cheeks upon his breast in joy.  
 The Sháh then would bestow on suppliants  
 All gifts presented to him. So they put  
 The crown and throne in charge of the high priest, C. 1486  
 And from the city fortunate Bahrám  
 Departed to the waste. Brave Gustaham  
 Had two fierce lions which he gave in chains  
 To the high priest. They dragged the savage beasts  
 Along, the draggers seeming mad with fright,  
 And to the footings of the ivory throne  
 Chained them, and set the crown within a nook  
 Upon it. All the world—spectator there  
 Of crown and throne—watched how the prince would  
 fare.

## § 13

*How Bahrám and Khusrau went to the Waste, and how Bahrám  
 slew the Lions and took his Seat upon the Throne*

Bahrám Gúr and Khusrau went on the waste,  
 And with full hearts approached the lions. Khusrau,  
 On seeing the fierce beasts with the crown between  
 them,

Said to the archimages: "He that seeketh  
 The sovereignty should be the first to try.  
 Moreover he is young and I am old—  
 Too feeble to resist fierce lions' claws—  
 So let him use his youth and vigour first."

Bahrám made answer, saying: "Good. 'tis well.  
 We will not blink fair words."

With that he took

An ox-head mace while the world wondered at him.  
 An archmage said : " O wise and holy king !  
 Who biddeth thee fight lions ? Canst thou have  
 More than the sovereignty ? So in its quest  
 Give not thy life and person to destruction  
 Thus wantonly. Herein no blame attacheth  
 To us, 'tis thine own act, the world is thine."

Bahram said : " O explorer of the Faith !  
 Thou and the other folk are not to blame.  
 I am the man to fight these savage lions ;  
 'Tis my delight to battle with the brave."

The archmage answered : " Refuge then with God,  
 And, if thou needs must go, first purge thy heart  
 Of sin."

He did according to that word,  
 Repented, purged his heart, bathed in a stream,  
 And sought upon the plain a place of prayer.  
 Then as he prayed before all-holy God,  
 And laid his cheeks upon the dusky ground,  
 He said : " Almighty ! let Thy servants triumph.  
 If I—Thy servant—justly seek to cleanse  
 The world of evil give my soul assurance  
 In this strife, let me overcome the lions."

C. 1487

Thence came the wise Sháh and at once set forth  
 Upon his way, armed with the ox-head mace.  
 Now when the valiant lions saw him coming,  
 One on the instant snapped its chain and charged  
 The exalted king. That hero smote its head,  
 And dimmed its eyes, then going to the other  
 Smote its head whence the blood ran down its breast,  
 Then took his seat upon the ivory throne,  
 Placed on his head the heart-delighting crown,  
 And put his trust in God who is our Refuge,  
 The Guider of the lost. Khusrau drew near,  
 Did homage, and thus said : " Exalted Sháh !  
 Blest be thy sitting on the throne, and may

The heroes of the world be slaves before thee.  
Thou art the Sháh, we are thy slaves and further  
Thy good in everything."

The mighty men

Showered jewels over him, invoking blessings  
Upon his crown. A universal shout  
Ascended from the world. That jubilance  
Was on Surúsh's day in month Ázar  
Whereon Bahram assumed the sovereignty,  
And won fruition of the crown and Grace.

A cloud hath risen and the moon's obscured ;  
From that dark cloud a shower of Milk is poured .  
No river, plain, or upland can I spy,  
The raven's plumes are lost against the sky ;  
In one unceasing stream egg-apples<sup>1</sup> fall :  
What is high heaven's purpose in it all ?  
No fire-wood, salted meat, or barley-grain  
Are left me, naught till harvest come again !  
Amid this gloom, this day of tax and fear.  
When earth with snow is like an ivory sphere,  
All mine affairs in overthrow will end  
Unless my hand is grasped by some good friend.<sup>2</sup>

Now will I tell to thee so strange a tale  
That in the wonder wonder's self will fail.

<sup>1</sup> The fruit of the egg-plant (*Solanum esculentum*), of which there are two varieties—a white and a purple.

<sup>2</sup> Reading with P.



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<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 396 *note*.

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